

Porch Renovation | Storage for a Basement Workshop

How-To

The Enthusiast's Guide to Home Improvement



'20 HOME IMPROVEMENT PRODUCT GUIDE & DIRECTORY

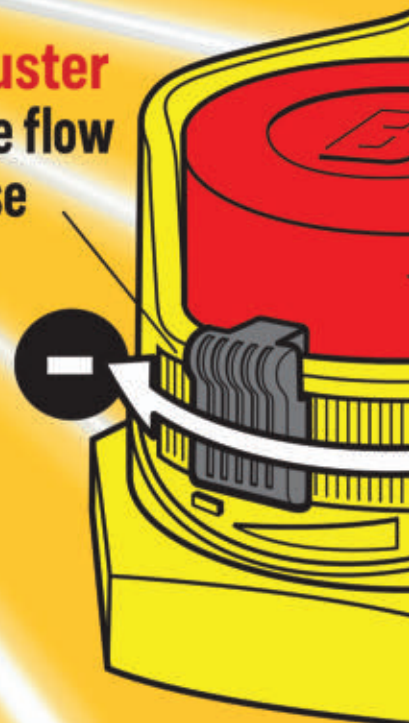


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Welcome to *Extreme How-To's* "Home Improvement Product Guide," a directory of suppliers of tools and materials for virtually any DIY project. When it's time to tackle your next remodel, refer to this guide to find what you need, when you need it. Use it like the Yellow Pages of home improvement to find everything from cabinets and countertops to roofing and flooring. We stuffed this book full of reliable contact information, including websites, phone numbers and more.

But that's not all. In this issue, our friend Mark Clement walks us through a customized front porch renovation, complete with cedar ceiling and a bespoke handrail design. Pro remodeler Rob Robillard demonstrates a proven method for removing stubborn stains from an asphalt driveway. And Sarah Hutchinson from the Concrete Network shares eight warning signs that a house has foundations issues.

I hope you enjoy our annual directory. Keep it around your workshop, within handy reach when you need to replenish your supplies or order a new tool. That's the idea, because we're here to help.

Thank for reading,



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Q: Should I use brick or brick veneer for my home?

A: Made from clay and shale, bricks give a home a uniform look that complements almost every exterior home design. Solid brick is a sturdy long-lasting construction material, and solid brick homes are typically built using two layers of brick, or a concrete block with a layer of brick for the exterior. As a building material, brick is fireproof, durable and can withstand environmental conditions like earthquakes or heavy winds. Brick construction doesn't require wood, so you won't have to worry about termites or decay. It's a low-maintenance material that has excellent color retention. Brick is expensive, however, and for just the materials, you could pay between \$6 and \$15 per square foot. Factoring professional installation, materials and labor could range between \$14 and \$30 per square foot.

Brick veneer is a technique that utilizes non-structural materials to create the look and feel of brick. While solid brick homes are built to structurally support a house, brick veneer relies on the house for reinforcement, usually steel and wooden frames. The brick veneer is added as siding. Brick veneer is a more cost-effective way to get the look and feel of solid brick, averaging \$4.00 to \$10.00 per square foot. Since brick veneer is much easier to install than solid brick, you can also bypass the cost of hiring a mason. Veneer can be added at any point during construction and is a much better insulator, and the air cavities between the brick veneer and exterior of a home will help keep moisture out.

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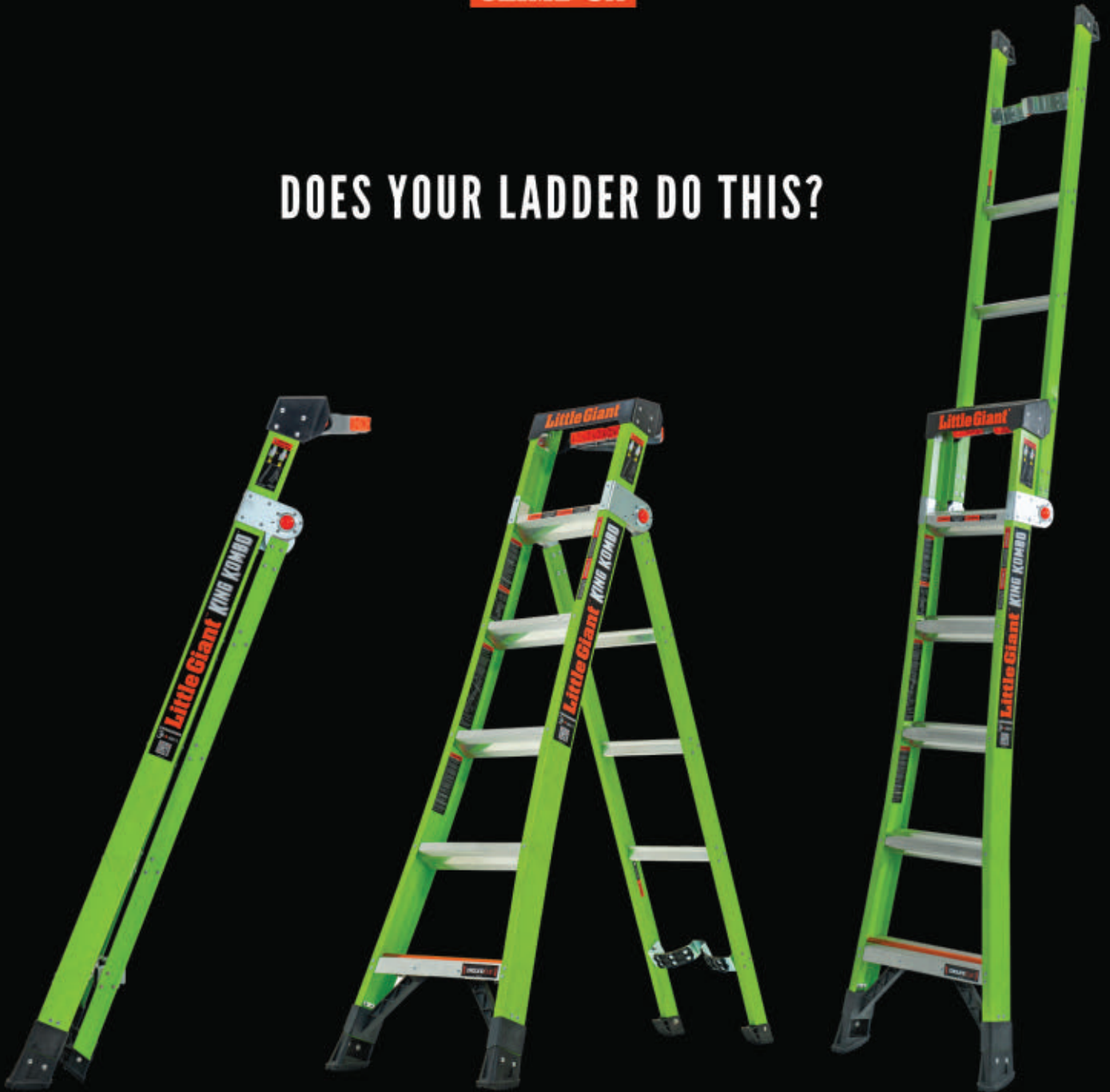
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Q: How do I paint over furniture that has been coated in polyurethane?

A: The tried and true method for refinishing furniture is to strip or sand down to bare wood. Another option is to use a chemical to etch the polyurethane prior to recoating. First, thoroughly wash the surface, using

TSP for heavy-duty cleaning. Etch and de-gloss the surface with 100-grit abrasive. You should see light scratches in the old finish. Vacuum all sanding dust and wipe all woodwork with a clean, damp cloth. Using a rag saturated in Liquid Surface Preparation agent, apply the chemical to the finished wood to agitate the surface, following the directions on the container. Apply primer to the treated surface within thirty minutes.

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A: Carbide (specifically tungsten carbide and titanium carbide) is a common material used for cutting tools such as saw blades, router bits, lathe bits and masonry drill bits. Carbide is used for the cutting edge because it stays sharper longer than most other materials and can hold an edge ten to twenty times longer than steel. The carbide tips are brazed onto the steel body of the blade or bit. The blades and bits aren't made entirely of carbide because they would be very expensive, but also because the body would be very brittle, and steel is less likely to crack or shatter. **EHT**



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Clean your Driveway, the Right Way

Remove Rust Spots from Asphalt



By Rob Robillard

It's easy to know the right thing to do after you've made a mistake.

A few months back, I was cutting a bunch of metal rods (rebar) and did not anticipate all the microscopic metal dust remaining on my driveway and leaving unsightly rust stains.

My first thought was to pressure-wash the driveway. However, rust comes from a chemical reaction and pressure-washing is typically not enough to remove it.

SPOT-CLEANING

Instead, I spot-treated the rust spots with an acid-based stain remover.

I've used ZEP's Calcium, Lime Scale, and Rust remover (called ZEP CLR for short) on a few remodeling projects in the past, as when salvaging claw-foot tubs with heavy mineral staining, and the product worked amazingly well. ZEP is a time-tested, professional-grade cleaner that's been around for 80 years.

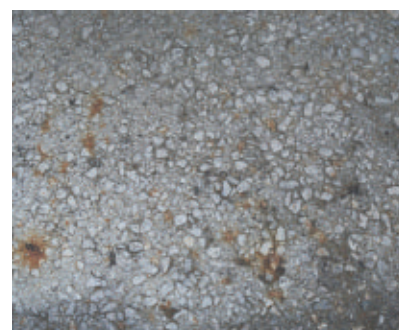
To begin, use the CLR remover on a small, inconspicuous spot to test it before using on the entire stained area. It needs to be rinsed off quickly, so keep a hose handy.

MIXING THE CLR SOLUTION

The ZEP Calcium, Lime Scale, and Rust remover is a fast-acting,

concentrated cleaner. Here's the best approach to using it for rust stains on a driveway:

- 1.** Mix a 50/50 solution using warm water.
- 2.** Apply to stained surfaces with a stiff-bristle brush.
- 3.** Rinse after 5–10 minutes.
- 4.** Perform a second application at full strength, if needed.
- 5.** Rinse again.
- 6.** It's important to always read the manufacturer's label and follow their instructions.



Before and after cleaning. Rust is the result of a chemical reaction, so pressure-washing alone is typically not enough to remove the stains.



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PRESSURE-WASH THE DRIVEWAY

Once the rust stain was treated, I used Zep Driveway and Concrete Pressure Wash Cleaner Concentrate in my

pressure washer to clean the entire driveway surface.

I simply add this cleaner to my pressure washer's detergent reservoir and I'm good to go. As both a remodeling contractor and



CLR cleaner can be used on stucco, cement, porcelain, glass and fiberglass to remove stains and discoloration.



Apply the cleaner to the driveway surface with a stiff-bristle brush.

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Before

After



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a homeowner, I like construction-grade, concentrated cleaners like this, because there's no futzing around, I simply add the cleaner to the pressure washer and get the job done fast.

The Zep Pressure Wash Cleaner is designed to remove tough oil stains and grime from asphalt, brick, concrete or other aggregate surfaces. (It is not intended for painted or wood surfaces that will not be refinished.)

PRESSURE-WASHING STEPS

1. Wet all surrounding vegetation and grass with pure water. Saturate the soil to avoid plants from soaking up chemical overspray. (You can also cover plants with plastic if desired.)

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QUICK FIX

2. Most driveways have a slope, so you should work on the uphill side of the slope.

3. Apply the cleaner to the driveway at low pressure, working in manageable sections.

4. Keep the surface wet, re-applying the cleaner as needed.

5. Allow the cleaner to soak in for 5-10 minutes.

6. Pressure-wash the surface in sections, working in a down-slope direction.

When cleaning concrete, a stiff-bristle brush will help work the cleaner into the porous surface.



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Pro Tip: The Zep Driveway and Concrete Pressure Wash Cleaner requires you to use a pressure washer with a downstream chemical injector. Downstream injection introduces the chemical into the system after the pump, so no chemical will be run through the pressure-washer pump.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Like I said earlier, a little foresight may have prevented the need to do this project, but that's life. Stuff happens, and we have to deal with it. The key is to use

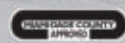
Load the Pressure Wash Concentrate into the detergent reservoir.



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QUICK FIX

the right tools to get the job done safely, efficiently and effectively.

By following these steps using a pressure washer and a well-known, pro-grade cleaner, you'll be well on your way to a clean driveway, walkway or patio. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Rob Robillard is a professional remodeling contractor. Visit his website at www.aconcordcarpenter.com.

Thoroughly soak the concrete surface and allow the cleaner to work for 5 or 10 minutes while keeping the surface wet. Pressure-wash the surface until clean.



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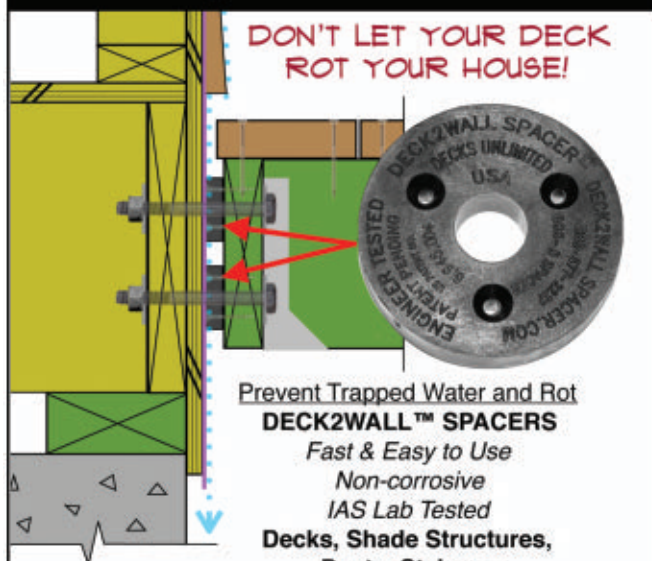
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ANATOMY OF A BESPOKE PORCH RENOVATION

From post to vaulted ceiling—a really regal rail.

By Mark Clement

I could write entire articles on the individual phases of this porch renovation. I could dive deep with more than a thousand words on demolition alone or on the cedar ceiling of succulence (it really is luscious—all clear tongue-and-groove). Or I could focus on the bespoke hand-rail I made from Regal Rail's

ornamental metal parts and cedar parts I fabricated on site. However, I'd probably make our friendly editor go crazy, so instead I decided to hit on the high points.

By hitting the high points, I can touch on all the cool aspects and cover some time-saving tips for both pros and DIY'ers.

If you've never remodeled a porch before—or never done one quite like this, and it's a first for me—it's got some super unique details. I think taking a wide view with photos and captions will give you an idea of what you're in for, and where you can go on your porch project with a little imagination.



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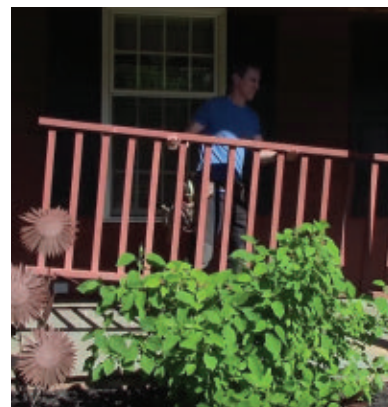
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ANATOMY OF A BESPOKE PORCH RENOVATION



Porches are usually populated, so make a plan and set aside some time to place items out of the way.

Avoid pounding materials with a hammer during demolition. Cut whenever possible. The reciprocating saw worked great here.



BEFORE

There wasn't much wrong with the existing porch. It was 30 years old and plain, but it was well built with sound materials (lots of Western Red Cedar) and easily could have been tuned up. But, the customer wanted a specific look, so that's what we set out to achieve.

DEMOLITION

The first thing to go was the ceiling fan. It would be reused. To hedge my bets against the



inevitable lost screw, I captured everything in duct tape then taped everything to the body of the ceiling fan.



Hoo else is going to move all this stuff if I don't. Owl tell you: Nobody. (This pun stuff is for the birds.)



The ceiling was made of aluminum. Held tight to the framing with roofing nails, that thing was not going to leave easily. Rather than rip and pull at it, thereby applying asymmetric forces to something installed with symmetric forces, I kerfed it with a grinder so I could get tools behind it and pull it down in the opposite direction it was installed.

Also, ripping metal apart means you basically turn all the torn edges into blades. Don't do that. I get shivers down my spine just thinking about a yucky slice wound.



With the ceiling down, I was able to get at the strapping above it. I used the NestorBars demo bar—a contractor-invented thing of beauty. If you're tearing up a deck or doing almost any demolition at all, it's a must have. It also works as a great lever for lifting stuff up.



Backstory: After I got the ceiling down, the customer walked out and said, "How do we get rid of those horizontal boards?"

I answered, "By altering the permit," which I did. The inspector let me delete all of them. More on that later. Here, clean cuts and ample leverage are our

friends. I cross-cut the joists with a circular saw. Once free, I carefully pried and twisted them off the ledger.



With the joists rough cut, I snapped a line 2 inches out from the beam so I could transition up and into the bottom of the rafters. This is a very specific detail, but the point is that if



you vault a ceiling like this, you're going to get into framing that was never meant to be trimmed (the beam) and framing that was never meant to see the light of day. The key is transitioning between the two carefully. It requires some careful planning, layout, and seeing into the future.

The same thing is happening here: Transitioning from the framing meant to, in this case,



no framing at all. So, in order to flatten the gable ends to accept the cedar later, I had to add studs and integrate with the trim elevation.



A couple things are happening in this photo. First, look at the jack and the squash plate it sits on. I crank that up just enough to wiggle the existing post out and put the new post in. Not shown to my left (because it is hard to build these and shoot a media package at the same time) is the friction-fit 2x4 safety

ANATOMY OF A BESPOKE PORCH RENOVATION

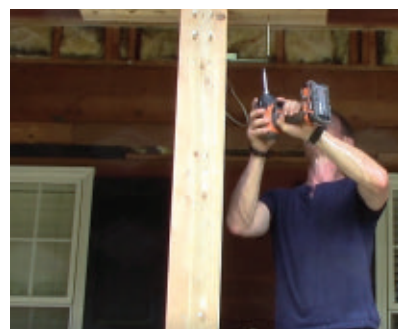
post, in case something didn't go right. Finally, note the new post. It's my patented* 2x6-2x4-2x6 laminated post.

*Okay, it's not patented. Anybody can do this, but I'm hoping I invented it. I'll put it on my urn. "Here lies the dust of the guy who invented the built-up post."

The reason the porch roof has to be lifted when placing the posts is due to geometry. A rectangle is longer on the diagonal than it is end to end. Even if I



tried to make all the post cuts super-exact, there would be no way to just tip in a new post in. By the way, this same geometry is the reason you can't tip up a framed wall in a basement remodel and have it be tall enough. It is also why the run of a hip rafter is 17-inches, not 12-inches like a common rafter.



Before installing the post, I use Spax PowerLag structural screws to fasten the plate on top of the post down into it. This is

both structural and decorative. I install the post next. Then, right along the centerline of the plate I drive PowerLags up into the girder. These things aren't going anywhere any time soon.

The center ply of the three-piece post is left 5-1/2 inches short so I can slide a decorative corbel into the center ply. This



provides the molding detail my customer is looking for, and it gives me a way to hide the large screw heads locking the post to the framing.



To get around having no horizontal members below (the ceiling joists we removed), I fastened the ridge ledger to the studs with more PowerLag structural screws (1/4 x 5-in.) right into framing.

Next, we installed Rockwool—my favorite insulation ever—in the ceiling joists. The idea is that it stops summer heat from radiating through the roof assembly and heating up the space



beneath. (Not my idea.) Cutting Rockwool on edge is a fast way to size it, and it cuts easily with a bread knife. Did it work?



You bet it worked. It was a noticeable difference in comfort. Plus, friction-fitting the Rockwool between the rafters is approximately 34,000 times better than smashing paper ears on other insulation with the slap stapler.



I then installed the transition molding around the rafter stubs.

The particular rafter shown here was crowned, so when I nailed the cedar to it, it cupped,



and installing the next straight groove onto a curved tongue is nearly impossible. So, using my “use it every day” Hyde multi-tool, I’m prying the cedar back into plane.



The cedar is installed with the tongue up and toe-nailed with 15-gauge finish nails.

“Bespoke” means it’s made from scratch to your specifications, and the bespoke handrail I made has several components, mainly a 2-piece top and bottom cap assembly (total of 4 pieces). The caps are simply 2x6 boards ripped to fit between the posts and beveled to shed water and



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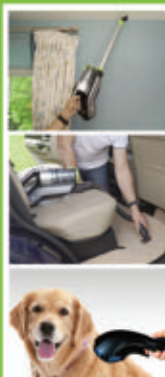
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ANATOMY OF A BESPOKE PORCH RENOVATION

deliver a nice look. All of that is done on the table saw.

The Regal Rail pickets come next. Integrating these parts—parts that were never meant to be integrated—was the biggest of the big challenges on this project. The payoff was awesome.

Before assembling the metal and wood parts, I applied a coat of latex stain to the rail caps. Using the Hyde StirWhip is my



new favorite way to mix any coating. It's fast, clean and awesome. (Hyde doesn't pay me to say that, by the way).

The decorative pickets are solid aluminum. I cut those

to length—37-1/2 inches—then pre-drilled pilot holes in my rails on layout. I propped up the Regal Rail so I could install it on the center line of my beveled piece. I then fastened it with a stainless-steel screw. I used stainless because it is softer than hardened steel. It worked.

Round Regal Rail balusters were integrated as well. These have what I call “receiver lugs”



and are easy to install. They must, however, be cut exactly 1/8 inch shorter than the other balusters, so everything snugs up tightly. I know, this requires lots of steps, but give me a break. I'm making this up as I go.



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With all the handrail pieces mated up and snugged, toe-screws driven into the post lock it together.

To wrap it all up, I drive screws through the bottom of the rail assembly and into the top cap. There's not a screw head to be seen.

I'm leaving a lot out, but this is the gist of the project. You can vault and clad the ceiling, which is an awesome design detail. You cannot lose your ceiling fan hardware because

it's taped to the ceiling fan. You can pre-stain your porch parts. And, insulation is oddly appropriate outside—whodathunk?

Ceilings can soar and rails can be regal. What's not to like? Front-porching should be a sport. **EHT**

Editor's Note: You can watch Mark's videos on deck building, pergolas, mailboxes, finishing basements and more at [YouTube.com/MyFixitUpLife](https://www.youtube.com/MyFixitUpLife).



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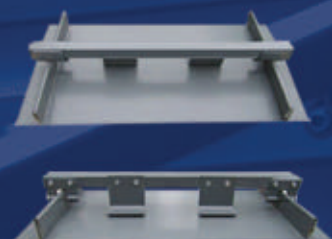


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A photograph of a wooden deck with a stone fireplace and a window looking out onto a lake. The deck is made of light-colored wood and has a dark brown railing. The fireplace is made of rough-hewn stone and has a dark metal grate. The window is framed in dark wood and looks out onto a lake with trees in the background. The text "Last-Deck" is overlaid in large, white, italicized letters, and "THE LAST DECK YOU WILL EVER NEED" is overlaid in smaller, white, italicized letters below it.

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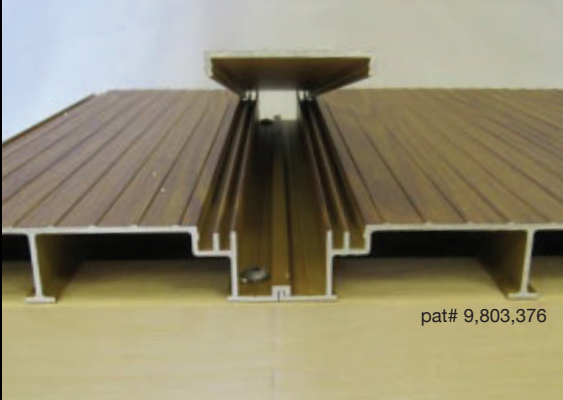
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WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS

By Matt Weber

I shudder to think how many hours of my life I've spent searching for lost tools or equipment. When you tackle a lot of home projects, tools and supplies get moved around and often misplaced or hidden by associated clutter. The result of all the searching due to disorganization can be a big, aggravating waste of time.

Having moved to a new home last year, I no longer have a detached garage as my workshop. Frankly, this breaks my heart, but such is life. Now I'm converting a basement garage into my project headquarters and reorganizing all my gear.

The three driving factors for setting up a home workshop are Organization, Storage and Visibility.

WHERE TO PUT WHAT

Organizing your tools in a logical manner makes it easy to know where to go to get what you need. Over the years I've developed a method for grouping tools by size, shape and application.

Organizing by size is often self-explanatory, because large items such as large table saws, miter saws, pressure washers and air compressors are heavy enough to require floor space. Aside from locating them in the most lightly trafficked area of the workshop, these things are generally stored wherever space is available and often become the obstacles around which to arrange the rest of the shop. The more large items you can store elsewhere—such as an outdoor shed—the more layout options and elbow room you'll have for everything else.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are very small items, which can be stored in cabinets and drawers. These easily stored items, however, can be difficult to find if they're stacked and concealed. To make things easy to find, I have a tool cabinet where I keep one drawer dedicated only to drill and driver bits. A second drawer holds blades for jigsaws, recip saws and other cutting tools. All the drawers are organized this way—sorting by both size and utility.

I have too many sockets and wrenches to occupy a single drawer, so I have an entire toolbox dedicated to storing box-end wrenches, socket wrenches of varying sizes, a wide range of sockets and their corresponding extensions and fittings. I've found that keeping a toolbox full of these mechanical tools makes the entire kit easy to grab and go, when it's time for to work on an automobile or assemble furniture.

For the home handyman, the bulk of the small items will over time consist of accumulated fasteners in all shapes and sizes. From nuts and bolts to nails and screws, I have too many boxes and too little space not to stack the containers. This can make finding the right box difficult, so I mitigate this by storing a sampling of the most commonly used fasteners in small labeled containers mounted to a wall.

After sorting the large items and small items, I store everything else either by shape or application. A rake and a shovel serve wholly different uses, but their long-handle designs mean I hang them side-by side, inches away from long-handled pry bars and push-brooms, because I've found doing



Equipment Storage for a Basement Workshop

WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS



My first step to converting a basement to a workshop involved coating the walls with Drylok, which locks out moisture to prevent mold and mildew on the cinderblock walls. The white color also reflects light to help illuminate the room.

so to be an economical use of storage space.

Many of my power tools come in their own hard cases, which makes them flat and sturdy for easy stacking. In fact, a hot trend among manufacturers is to design stackable tool cases that interlock with similar cases above and below. I store my power tool cases stacked onto tool shelves, and top the cases with the “lumpier” tools that come in canvas bags.

Some tool categories don't match in shape or size but do in application, so I group them accordingly into bins, which I then stack on shelves. I have a bin full of painting tools—rollers, trays, brushes, tapes, sprayers, scrapers and more. I have another bin full of tile tools that includes grout floats, sponges, trowels, nippers, spacers, cutter, etc. Keep all these bins clearly labeled.

You might notice that words like “hang” and “stack” suggest a vertical means of storage, and this is to keep the floor space as unoccupied as possible to leave room to maneuver and allow ample square footage for a work table or benches. You'll find a zillion plans online to build your own plywood-and-lumber storage

shelves, or you can always install simple wall shelves using support brackets fastened to concrete or wall studs.

WALL-MOUNT STORAGE SYSTEMS

Wall-mount storage systems present another option. Slat-wall type wall storage systems are growing in popularity and for good reason: they're versatile, clean-looking and store tools and supplies conveniently off the floor for easy-to-see organization. Most of these wall-panel systems are made from PVC and are sold under the names Proslat, FlowWall, and the VersaTrack system from Craftsman—just to name a few. The panels are moisture-resistant and simple to clean, usually available in 4- to 8-foot lengths.

The panels install simply by screwing into the wall studs. Once installed, you can equip the walls with a variety of snap-in accessories, from baskets and shelves to a wide range of hooks. Depending on the accessory, these storage systems are strong enough to store shovels, sledge hammers, string trimmers and more. You'll even find wall brackets with the holding capacity to store a ladder a few feet off the floor.

For smaller tools, arranging tools on a pegboard panel is a



Next, I installed a system of slat-wall panels to keep as much gear off the floor as possible.



To anchor shelves or storage panels into block walls requires the use of either concrete screws or masonry anchors, plus a hammer-drill and carbide-tipped masonry bit to drill the pilot holes.



Slat-wall panels typically interlock and can be configured to fit your workspace.



Slat-wall panels can be equipped with a wide range of shelf brackets, baskets and more.

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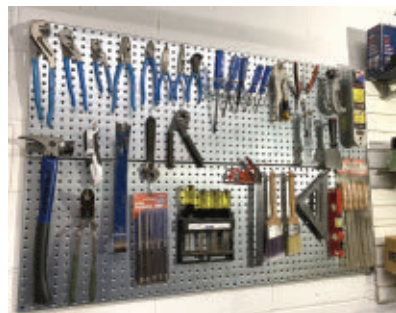
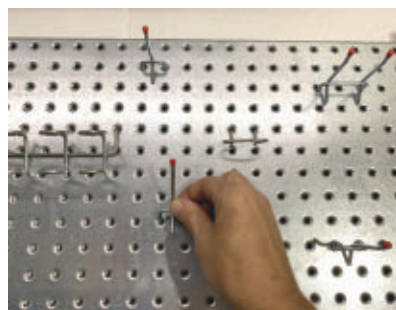
From hammer hooks to shovel collars and more, slat-wall accessories can be spec'ed to match whatever tools you need to store. This selection is part of the new Craftsman VersaTrack system.



Slat-wall accessories can also offer a surprising amount of weight capacity, and some brackets can even support the weight of ladders or outdoor equipment such as weed trimmers.

tried and true way to keep items in plain view and easy to grab. When a fiberboard pegboard won't cut it, there's AlligatorBoard manufactured from 20-gauge steel to be much stronger and more durable than ordinary pegboard. The metal won't warp, tear, dis-color or rust, and AlligatorBoard features strength-reinforcing dimpled holes, making it easier to install tool hooks than on other pegboards.

For any type of pegboard, hardware stores sell a huge variety of clips, hooks, holders, and clamps



Smaller items can be organized on a wall-mounted pegboard. The metal pegboard shown is made by AlligatorBoard, and it is equipped with a broad assortment of hooks and brackets to keep commonly used tools easy to find and grab.



I keep a sampling of the most commonly used fasteners in wall-mounted cups labeled for easy access.

A trend among power tool manufacturers is to make interlocking cases that stack and snap together for easy transport and storage. Shown is the new Craftsman VersaLock System.



that fit the handles and contours of hand tools ranging from screwdrivers and hammers to wrenches and squares.

WORKSHOP LIGHTING

Visibility is crucial to an organized workshop, and this requires good lighting. To upgrade the ceiling light in my garage-turned-workshop, I replaced an 8-foot fluorescent tube fixture with Striker Concepts' new MPI Multi-Point Illumination Motion Ceiling Light. Unlike a traditional single-point light fixture, the MPI creates five points of light from a single standard bulb fixture. These five lights are designed to illuminate all corners of the room and reduce shadows.

The MPI system is simple to install by simply screwing the

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WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS



Take vertical storage to the next level with ceiling-mounted storage racks that keep large items out of the way. Garage Gator offers Motorized Overhead Bike Lift & Storage Systems that lift up to 220 lbs. of gear up and off your garage floor. The adjustable 6-9' lift bar system connects hooks, straps and cables to bikes.

To upgrade the workshop lighting, we installed the new MPI Multi-Point Illumination System from Striker Concepts. The central light screws into a standard bulb outlet, and the surrounding four LED pods can extend up to 9 feet in any direction, so you can cast light right where you need it.

central hub into bulb fixture, so there is no need to hire an electrician. The surrounding light pods connect to the central hub with push-fit cables and extend up to 9.5 feet, where they can be screwed to the ceiling exactly where you need them. Simply twist the light pods to tighten the cables.

After installing the system, I'm pleased to report the combined light output of the MPI far outshines the 8-foot tube, lighting the peripheral edges of the room much more thoroughly than the old central fixture.

The MPI's motion sensor keeps the light off until I walk into the room, and a well-lit workshop is crucial to searching for all those tools that tend to go missing. **EHT**



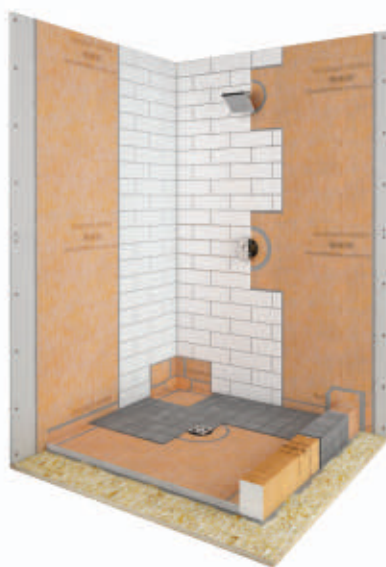


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8 Warning Signs of Foundation Issues

How to Identify Needed Repairs Before They Get Bad



By Sarah Hutchinson

Signs of a foundation problem include doors and/or windows that stick, jam, or have locks that don't work due to uneven floors.

- Other houses nearby have had foundation issues.

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR AND FIX

When most DIY'ers see a minor issue with their home, they bust out their tools to repair it themselves. However, certain easy-to-fix imperfections may be signs of a bigger problem.

Cosmetic signs that your home's foundation has shifted include:

- Corner cracks in your drywall
- Cracked, heaving, or sloping floors
- Exterior cracks in brick or stucco
- Gaps around the door or window frames, as well as the garage
- A chimney that is pulling away from the house
- Misaligned or sticking doors and windows
- Bowed basement walls
- Significant cracks in the foundation itself

Fixing these problems will improve the look of your home temporarily, but if the foundation isn't repaired, the issues will eventually return and get worse with

When it comes to foundations, time is of the essence. Catching a foundation problem early can save you time and money. Plus, you can rest easy knowing that your home is safe for you and your loved ones.

An unaddressed foundation problem can result in serious structural harm to your home, water damage leading to mold or mildew growth, as well as a drop in your home's resale value.

Your foundation is crucial to the integrity and safety of your home, so have the repair work done as soon as possible. If cost is a concern, check with your insurance company to see if the work is covered, or set up

a payment plan or financing with the repair company.

Foundation repair isn't something you should do yourself, but watching for the warning signs of potential issues around your home is essential and easy. Pay special attention to the condition of your foundation if any of the following are true:

- Your region experiences extreme weather cycles or severe drought.
- Your home is built on highly expansive clay soil.
- You've had an underground plumbing leak.
- Large trees with roots grow beneath your home.



*This cracked brickwork is caused by foundation settlement.
Photo courtesy Ram Jack.*

time. Put your tools down and call a foundation repair specialist to come to your home for an evaluation.

Repairing any cosmetic issues yourself can make it harder to diagnose and locate the underlying problem. The best time to fix these flaws is after your foundation has been stabilized by a professional crew. Once that's done, you can patch cracks or rehang doors until your heart's content.

It isn't uncommon for foundation repair to cost \$4,000 or more. After seeing your price estimates, you may be tempted to remedy the problem yourself. However, most professionals agree that this is not a good idea. Here's why:

- The average DIY'er won't be able to determine the severity of the problem.
- Inadequate repairs can bring down the value of your home.
- Special tools are required to get the job done.

- You could damage your home further.

- A professional may have to undo your work, which can add to the expense.

Keep in mind that most foundation repair companies provide free estimates, so there is no risk to have them out to assess the situation. The best companies also warranty their work. If you sell your home in the future, the warranty will transfer over.

WHAT'S THE BEST REPAIR METHOD?

The best way to repair a foundation is with piercing or piling—a system that corrects foundation settlement and ensures it won't happen again. Steel piles are driven far into the ground, so they won't be affected by soil expansion or contraction. The number and placement of piers can be determined by a foundation repair contractor.

One of the best things about

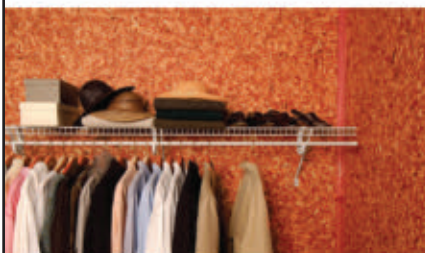
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this type of repair is that you can keep living in your home as usual. There is minimal disruption, and no heavy equipment is needed. In some instances, you may also need wall tiebacks or carbon fiber to help support bowed basement walls. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Sarah Hutchinson is the Director of Digital Content at ConcreteNetwork.com, the top online resource for the decorative concrete and repair industry. For ten years, Sarah has worked with industry experts, including Ram Jack®, a network of foundation repair specialists throughout North America. ConcreteNetwork.com can also be found on Facebook and Instagram.



A gap around window frames can be signs of trouble for your foundation. Photo courtesy Ram Jack.

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The Speedheater Cobra Infrared Paint Remover softens multiple layers of paint and varnish in less than 5 seconds. The 3-by-3-in. metal head gets into tight spaces and works well on detailed woodwork and carvings. Its light weight of 22 ounces saves wrist and arm strain which traditional, mechanical paint removers often cause. With extra moisture in old wood causing paint failure, the Cobra reduces this moisture content to 10-15 percent, making the wood perfectly level for strong paint adhesion. In addition, the infrared heat brings the natural resins up to the wood surface and rejuvenates old, dry wood before repainting.

The Speedheater Method is especially advantageous when working with the toxic lead paint found in most pre-1978 homes. The radiant, infrared rays only need to heat paint to 400-500 F to bubble it for fast scraping. This lower paint temperature doesn't vaporize lead usually found in old paint. Heat guns blow hot air onto the top layer of paint and must heat the paint to 1000 F to release it from the surface—a temperature which *does* release lead fumes. Also, exposure to flying lead dust and chips is greatly reduced with the Speedheater. The warmed paint scrapes off quickly into soft clumps which are easy to contain.

The entire surface-preparation process is also faster than with other methods. Chemical strippers require days for application, dwell time, scraping, neutralization, drying and extensive cleanup. Abrasive methods like sanding and shaving require more complex and costly containment and safety practices. After quick heating with the Speedheater Cobra and fast, clean, and safe scraping, the surface is immediately ready for priming. Visit eco-strip.com.



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ReVent by GTR Technologies is a fast screw-less fan mounting that blends high-performance, design and easy installation. Perfect for bathrooms, laundry rooms, etc., the humidity-sensing control turns on the bath fan when humidity is present and off when the room is dry, while the shield adds a subtle designer look to any room, and it is easy to install yourself. ReVent is designed to hide the sheetrock opening and seal the air gaps for better fan performance. Also, the patented design reflects sound back into the fan for a quieter fan and clean look. ReVent is the first ever vent fan that can detect humidity levels, turn itself on then turn itself off when dry, energy. The fans come in four styles: the original ReVent Ventilation Fan, the ReVent Ventilation Fan with LED Lighting, the ReVent Ventilation Fan with Humidity Sensing, and finally the ReVent Fan with both LED Lighting and Humidity Sensing. Visit www.reventfans.com.





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The new V20 Cordless Wet Tile Saw (CMCS4000) provides professional cutting via an extra-large, 17-in. cut capacity. Water fill lines inside the tile saw's tub help to provide excellent water containment in indoor or outdoor use. A roll cage handle makes the saw easy to carry and maneuver, while an innovative sliding cart provides accurate and easy cutting. The V20 Cordless Wet Tile Saw will come kitted with one 4.0Ah battery and charger for \$299 MSRP (CMCS4000M1). Powered by premium lithium-ion batteries that work across all V20 power tools and outdoor equipment, each battery comes with a state-of-charge indicator. Visit craftsman.com.

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The Oak 70.XTRA is an adjustable premier series spiral staircase that features solid Oak wooden stair treads and landing to complement and add style to any interior living space. Surrounding the full length of the staircase, the horizontal balusters and railing design is visually unique when compared to the traditional vertical baluster design of most stairs. The staircase can be easily installed by the homeowner in a single day using common household tools. The Oak 70.XTRA is available in 2 diameter sizes and is available in 2 choices of color...Hi-Gloss Black and Hi-Gloss White.

- Standard kit includes 12 oak wood stair treads, a landing, a complete handrail, and all necessary hardware and connectors.
- Diameters available include a 5 ft. 3 in. model and a 4 ft. 3 in. model.
- The height range for the standard kit is adjustable from 8 ft. 3 in. to 10 ft. 2 7/8 in. and with additional components, can be installed to a maximum height of 11 ft. 9 5/16 in.
- Powder coat finished painted in either Hi-Gloss Black or Hi-Gloss White.
- Can be installed in a clockwise or counterclockwise rotation.
- Stair treads and landing are made of solid Oak wood with a natural stain and a polyurethane protective coating.
- Balcony rail kits are available in matching color and horizontal baluster and railing design.
- Handrail is manufactured from an aluminum core surrounded by a soft PVC cover to allow the handrail to be curved at the time of installation to accommodate the radius of the staircase.
- Rise between stair treads is adjustable from 8 3/8 in. to 9 1/4 in.
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- A complete installation guide is included in all kits and an installation video is available upon request.
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