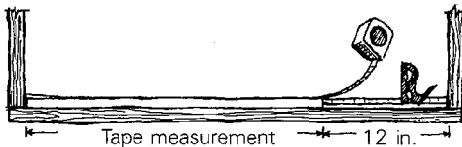


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Inside measurements

Finish trim work around windows or doors requires accurate inside measurements, but it's hard to get precise readings with a tape measure. The "see through" windows on some tapes don't work very well, and I've never gotten accurate results from measurements that include the length of the tape case.

Instead, I use both my tape measure and my combination square, as shown below. The square's blade butts against the inside surface, while the tape measure records the dis-



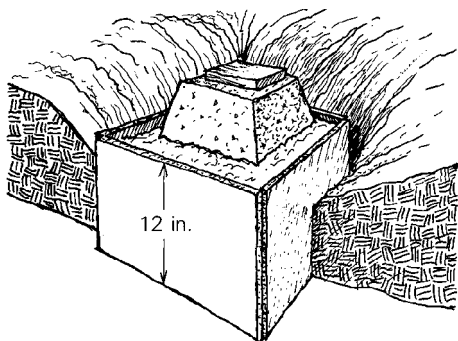
tance from the opposite edge to the blade. I add 12 in. to the tape reading for the total. This method is fast, precise and makes use of the tools I've already got in my belt.

Philip Zimmerman, Berkeley, Calif.

Gypboard concrete forms

We recently did a foundation job in very crumbly, sandy soil. The first task was to set 27 pier blocks in pier holes that were 18 in. on a side and 12 in. deep. But by the time we had dug down a foot, we often had a hole that was more than 2 ft. across at the top and growing. Faced with filling these craters with concrete, we calculated that we would waste more than a cubic yard.

Instead of ordering the extra concrete, we transformed four sheets of gypboard into form boxes. We cut the sheets into 6-ft. lengths, and scored them along their length at 18 in. o.c., leaving the face paper intact. Perpendicular to these scored lines, we cut the board into



12-in. wide strips. These strips were then folded into square boxes, placed in the oversized holes and backfilled. The forms not only saved concrete, but also gave us an accurate way to calculate our ready-mix order.

—Sunrise Builders, Santa Cruz, Calif.

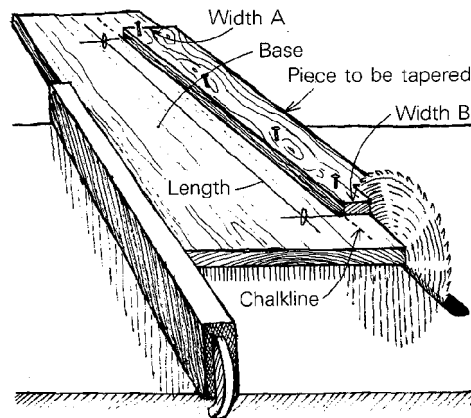
Stone touch-up

I use a Carborundum stone for sharpening. But keeping it flat and getting it to hold its lu-

bricant, despite repeated oil soakings, have been a continual hassle. To solve the first problem, I grind the stone on a broom-finished concrete floor. This is fast, and accurate enough. To prevent the lubricant from soaking through, I immerse the stone in a bucket of water. When the stone is saturated, a light application of oil or kerosene will stay right on the top. *—Tom Law, Davidsonville, Md.*

Taper jig

Here's a jig for a tapering a piece on a table saw. For the base, take a straight 1x10 or 1x12 and measure the length of the taper, squaring off the end marks. On these lines, mark the width of the taper (A and B in the drawing) at each end by measuring in from one edge of "the base. Connect these points with a chalkline. Tack the piece to be ripped to the base along the chalkline, and adjust the saw-fence



to the width of the base. Set the blade deep enough to cut both pieces, and you're ready to run it through, as shown.

If the piece you are tapering is finish trim and you're concerned about the nail holes showing, calculate where the nailing will come on the piece and use these same points for tacking the trim down to the 1x base for the saw run. *—Sam Yoder, Cambridge, Mass.*

A carbide tip

I go through a lot of steel circular-saw blades remodeling and building additions. I hate to pay \$2 a blade for sharpening, and then wait a week to get the blade back from the shop. But doing the sharpening myself takes more of my time than I'd like.

The answer for me is to use carbide-tipped blades and sharpen them myself with a diamond whetstone. Unlike the teeth on a steel blade, the carbide teeth on my blades are a simple series of flat planes that are easily reached with a small, flat stone.

The stone I use is a plastic block 4¼ in. by 1¾ in. by ¾ in. Diamond crystals are bonded to a nickel matrix that's embedded in the plastic. Mine was manufactured by Diamond Machining Technology, Inc. (34 Tower St., Hudson, Mass. 01749) and cost \$16.50 when ordered from a tool catalog. These diamond whetstones come in several sizes and are also just the ticket for those impossible-to-sharpen stainless-steel kitchen knives.

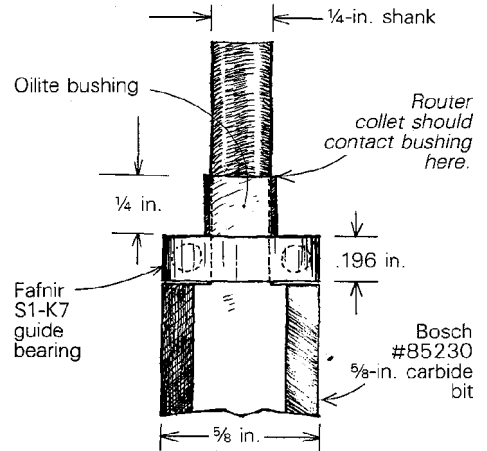
Although I take my blades to be profes-

sionally sharpened every third time, the touch-ups have paid for the stone many times over. *—Angelo Margolis, Sebastopol, Calif.*

Bearing-over bit

I recently found myself needing a two-flute router bit with a bearing mounted above the cutters, like the one Mark Songey described in "Timbers and Templates" (F/B #10, p. 38). My supplier didn't have one, and I didn't feel like waiting for the postman. So I pieced one together using readily available parts.

I started with a two-flute carbide bit (a Bosch #85230, ⅝ in. in diameter). Next I lo-



cated a guide bearing of the same shaft size and outside diameter as the cutters (Fafnir S1-K7), and a short Oilite bushing (¼ in. i.d. by ⅝ in. o.d. by ¼ in. high). The bearing slips over the shaft, and the bushing keeps the bearing close to the cutter—provided that the bushing is touching the collet. This contact is important because it eliminates any up-and-down play in the bearing.

The system works quite well. The parts cost about \$22, and they were all easy to find.

—Josh Rothman, Toledo, Ohio

Crayon grip

Here's a classy way to house a carpenter's crayon. First, get a piece of ½-in. copper tubing, about 3½ in. long. You can usually find one in the scrap pile after the plumbers have been on the job. With a hacksaw, make four slits about 1 in. long an equal distance apart in one end of the tube. Bend the resulting tabs in slightly to taper the end of the tube. Now slide the crayon in from the other end, and you're ready to write. This holder (drawing, below) is less bulky and much cheaper than the ones sold at hardware stores.

—Mike Tsutsui, Stockton, Calif.

