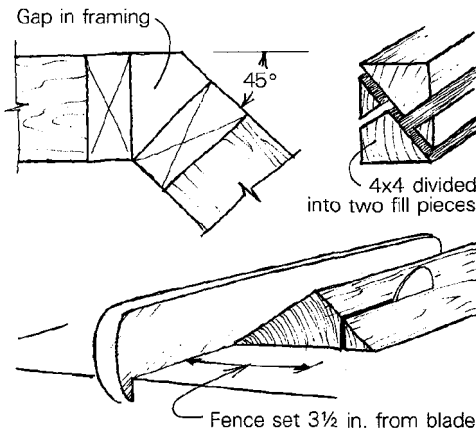


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Corner blocking

Until recently, framing walls with 45° angles had been something of a pain. I'd always end up with an odd-shaped void right on the corner on the outside face of the wall. Just leaving it would bring threats of bodily injury from the drywallers, so we'd have to cut an even more peculiar piece to fill this annoying gap. Then we discovered a way of filling the corner easily, with a minimum of waste.

First we rip a 4x4 diagonally on the band-saw (this can also be done on the 10-in. table saw but it takes two passes). Then we set the table-saw fence at 3½ in. and rip each of the halves, long side down, as shown in the drawing. This leaves us with two pieces that have a



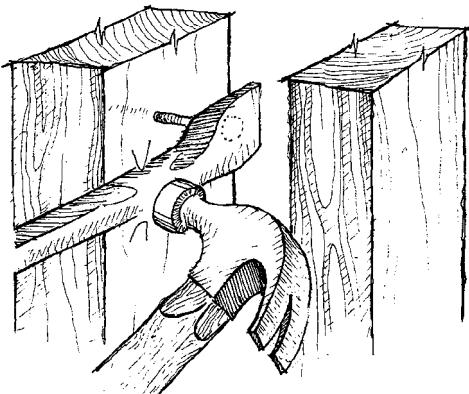
kiteshaped cross section—two 1½-in. faces and two 3½-in. faces. This kite shape precisely fits that odd space at the corner.

These pieces are especially useful in bays, which need a maximum amount of window space and a minimum amount of framing. Since the corner piece has virtually the same bearing area as a 2x4, we use them as king studs between trimmers.

—Tim Pelton, Fairfield, Iowa

Tight-spot nailing

The next time you have to sink a nail in a place beyond your hammer's reach, try the technique shown in the drawing. Place the flat

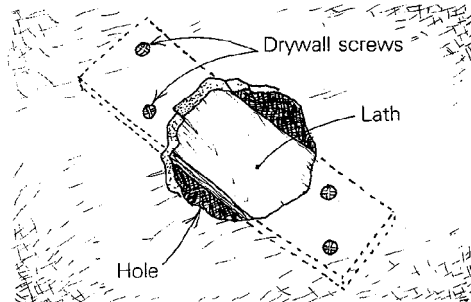


end of a 24-in. wrecking bar on the nail head, then hammer the bar shank a few inches from the nail. It works great in tight spots.

—Mike Lyon, Tacoma, Wash.

Patching drywall

Here is still another way to install a drywall patch in a spot that doesn't have any backing. First, cut an oversize patch, and nibble away at it until it fits the hole. Next, find a piece of plywood or lath that is longer but narrower than the hole. Slip the wood behind the drywall, and position it so that it spans the hole, as shown in the drawing below. Drive drywall screws through the wallboard and into the



lath to draw it up tight to the back of the gypsum board. Screw the patch to the lath and you're ready to fill the cracks with joint compound.

—William Barstow, Arcata, Calif.

Barnboard basics

I recently installed some weathered boards taken from an old barn as wainscoting in our dining room. In doing so, I used several tricks that may be helpful to others who want to use this rustic but fragile material.

First, nail it to a solid underlayment. Although furring strips will work, a layer of ½-in. plywood is better. It lets you tighten up a board with a nail wherever it's needed. I painted the plywood a medium grey, which minimized the impact of empty knotholes and the cracks between the boards. I also used a spray can of grey paint to touch up the ends of freshly cut boards. Left unpainted, these ends have a nasty way of showing.

Cupped boards can be trouble when you're using weathered material for paneling. I got around this problem by making two or three saw kerfs down the length of each board. The cuts come to within about ¼ in. of the good side, and they allow you to bend the cup out of the boards as they are nailed to the wall. You can expect to waste a few boards with this method, but the ones that survive will give the desired rustic effect without looking shabby.

—Dale Nichols, Toledo, Ore.

Tool-belt tip

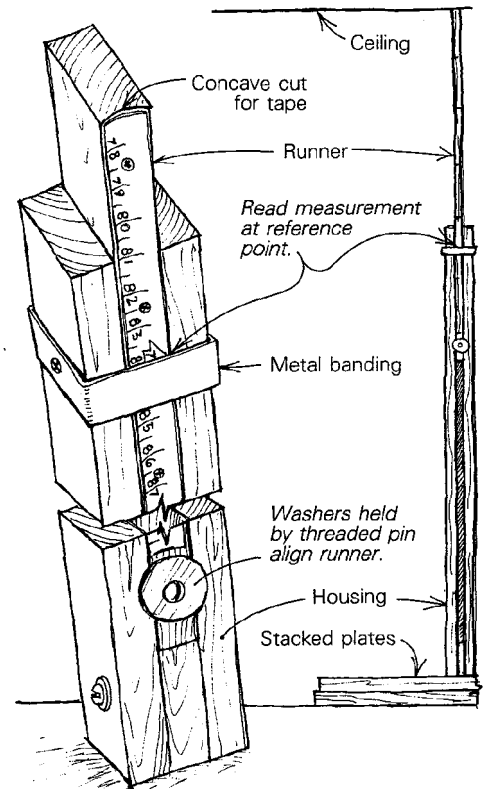
I use separate pouches on my tool belt depending on whether I'm doing rough carpentry, drywall or electrical work, and I finally found the perfect belt to hold them—a skindiver's weight belt. These belts are made of nylon webbing, so they are plenty tough. Even so, my belt is comfortable, even when I'm bending or stretching, because I can adjust it up or down on my waist and hips with the quick-release buckle.

—Michael Sweem, Downey, Calif.

The slip stick

This versatile time-saver uses a simple story-pole principle. I call it the slip stick, and I use it to measure distances between floor and ceiling without running up and down ladders or bending my tape into hard-to-read compound bends.

The basic components of the slip stick are an old tape, a few pieces of 1x stock and whatever hardware you have around to make it work. The first component is a 7-ft. U-shaped housing, as shown in the drawing below. The second is a 6-ft. runner that fits inside the housing, where it can slide up or down. The runner has a portion of a tape-measure blade screwed to it. The portion of the tape you'll need is from the 7-ft. mark or so (attached to the top of the runner) down to about 13 ft. If



you want to get fancy you can cut a concave curve into the runner, so the edges of the runner and tape will be flush.

Near the top of the assembly, I hold the two components together with a metal band that doubles as a reference point. It has to be precisely placed so that the tape at that point reads the exact length of the stick with the runner retracted. At the bottom of the runner I bolt a large washer on each face to keep the runner in the housing.

When my slip stick is closed, I can slip it under a ceiling of minimum height. With the 6-ft. runner extended, I can measure ceilings up to 13 ft. high. When I measure for a new wall in an old space, I cut the top and bottom plates and set one atop the other. With my slip stick on top of them, I can read the exact stud length without having to subtract the thickness of the plates.

—Sam Yoder, Cambridge, Mass.