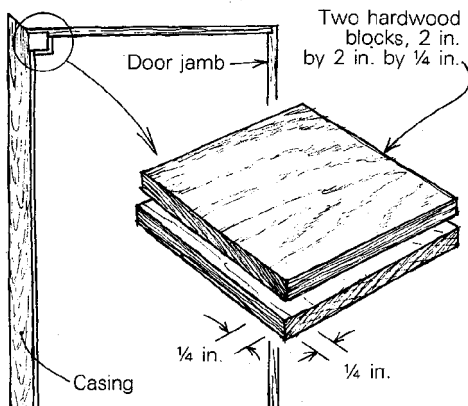


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Offset jig

Whenever I install door or window casings, I use the jig shown below to make sure that I get an accurate 1/4-in. reveal. It's made of two



square pieces of hardwood, 1/4 in. thick, that are glued together with a 1/4-in. offset. This jig has so many corners that half the time I grab it out of my nail bag it's in the right position for use. —John Sandstrom, Fort Dodge, Iowa

Foundation line markers

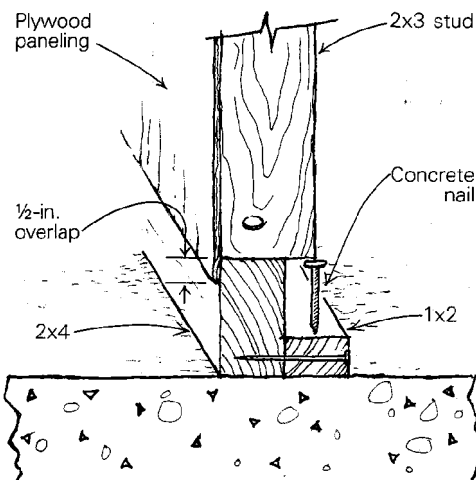
When I string lines for a foundation, I use alligator clips to mark the outside dimensions of the building. These clips are available at any electrical-supply house and even at some large hardware stores. They're easy to see, and I can quickly move them as I adjust the lines into square. I usually keep about a dozen clipped to my apron as I work.

—Charles Fockaert, Eureka, Calif.

Basement baseplate

Here's a simple and economical way to create an attractive baseboard for a one-sided interior wall in a basement by using a composite bottom plate. It consists of a 1x2 nailing strip attached to a 2x4 placed on edge, as shown in the drawing below.

First, drill the 1x2 strip at 12-in. intervals



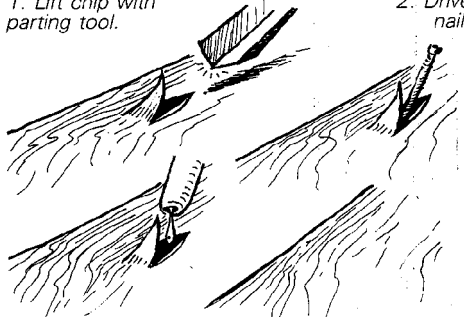
with a bit slightly smaller than the nails you plan to use, and fasten the strip to the 2x4. Then paint the face of the 2x4 with flat black paint, and fasten the assembly to the slab floor with concrete nails. Now toenail 2x3 studs to the base on 16-in. centers, and panel the wall. Let the plywood run over the base plate about 1/2 in. leaving a flat black reveal 3 in. wide. —John Molnar, Moorestown, N. J.

Invisible nailing

We think Byron Papa's technique for filling nail holes is noteworthy (*FHB* #20, p. 14), but we like our method better. We don't worry about filling nail holes—we eliminate them.

Before driving the nail, we use a gouge or a parting tool to lift a small chip of wood from the surface of the work (1 in the drawing). Be careful not to break off the chip. Now drive the nail into the resulting groove (2), and

1. Lift chip with parting tool.



3. Glue chip in place.

4. Nail hole is concealed.

countersink it. Glue the chip back in place (3), and you've got a concealed nail hole with perfectly matching grain (4).

—Daniel Casciato and Christopher Gecik, Cleveland, Ohio

Resawing on site

If you've ever used resawn wood as a finish material, you know how troublesome it can be to run short by a few boards. The bandsaw operator at the lumberyard is never very happy to get an order for two or three pieces of custom-cut stock, and it can be a real hassle to coax him into putting aside larger jobs to fill your request.

The last time this happened to our crew, we solved the problem with a reciprocating saw running a dull, multi-purpose blade. We secured the work to a pair of sawhorses, and ran the blade flat against the finished side of the wood. The surface texture can be varied by changing the angle of the saw, the number of teeth on the blade and the speed of its reciprocating action. Wide boards can be textured with a longer blade worked from both sides.

—Ernie Ale, Santa Ana, Calif.

Dry-wall advice

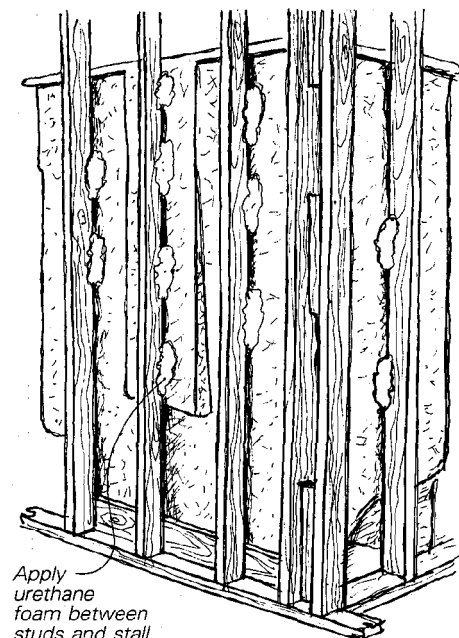
When I build or repair a mortarless stone wall, I fill the voids between the stones with gravel. This makes the wall more stable by locking the larger stones in place. It will also increase the mass of the wall—a wall built without mortar can be nearly half air space.

If you don't "dry-grout" like this, nature has a way of gradually filling the voids with soil, roots, vines, mice and snakes. This organic material can often be the downfall of a dry wall. The gravel will also help to prevent the damage caused by frost heaving.

—Stephen M. Kennedy, Orrtanna, Pa.

Shower-stall backing

Here's an inexpensive way to make the thin, flimsy walls of a fiberglass shower more rigid. Apply expanding urethane foam at several spots up and down the wall studs behind the shower walls, as shown in the drawing. The



Apply urethane foam between studs and stall.

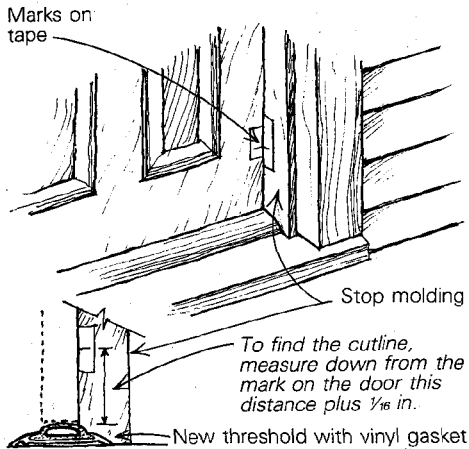
foam will do its expanding sideways. When it cures, the shower walls will have a lot less give.

—Byron Papa, Schriever, La.

Installing a new threshold

It's important for a door to fit snugly against its new vinyl-gasket threshold, particularly if the system you're using doesn't include a door-bottom sweep. But fitting an old door with one means having to trim the door bottom very accurately.

Before removing the door from its hinges to install the threshold, I put a piece of tape down low on the face of the door and another across from it on the face of the stop (or its equivalent on a rabbeted jamb), as shown in



the drawing above. Then I make a single pencil line across the two as a registration mark, and I remove the door. Once I've installed the new threshold, I can then measure from the top of the gasket to the pencil mark on the stop and transfer this number to the door by measuring from its registration mark down. I usually add $\frac{1}{16}$ in. to get my cutline—this will ensure good compression when the door is closed. —Rod Goettelmann, Vincentown, N. J.

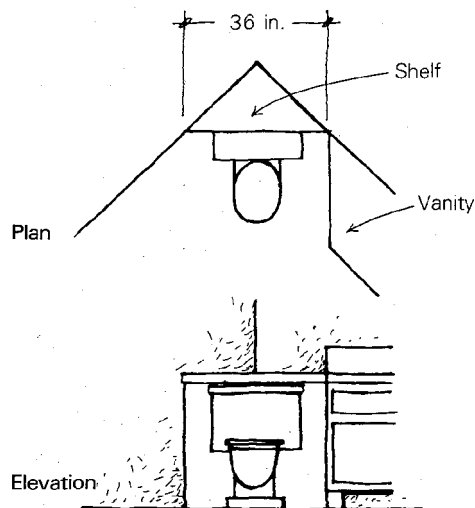
The bathroom angle

The drawing at right illustrates an idea that I use frequently in the houses that I design. It

revolves around mounting the toilet at a 45° angle in the bathroom corner. Positioned this way, the toilet looks better, it's easier to clean around and there is room behind it for a convenient shelf.

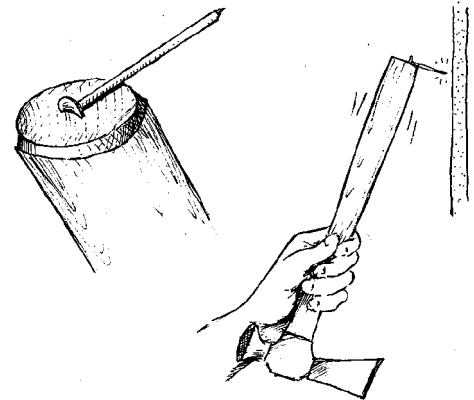
These were some of the bonus features of the design. My original intention was just to make it more convenient for folks in wheel-chairs. Many have to face the toilet to get on it... me for instance.

—Jay Wallace, Ashland, Ore.



Arm extension

Sometimes when I hang drywall, I have to tack down a spot that's about 10 in. beyond my reach. Rather than move the scaffold to drive one nail, I use my wooden hammer handle to extend my range. I rest a nail on a hard surface, and drive the handle butt down on the head of the nail until it's embedded in the



handle, as shown above. Then I hold the hammer upside-down, set the nail where I want it, bring the handle back into my hand and drive it home. This trick also works with some hammers that have handles covered with rubber sleeves. Just tuck the nail head into the small hole at the center of the handle butt.

—Dell Wade, Seattle, Wash.

Another chopsaw table

Geoff Alexander's article on power miter saws (*FHB* #19, pp. 42-45) made me think about my own setup for the tool. As shown in the drawing below, I mount my 10-in. Makita on a cabinet that has a drawer and some shelves. This storage space is for stashing blades, sandpaper and other paraphernalia.

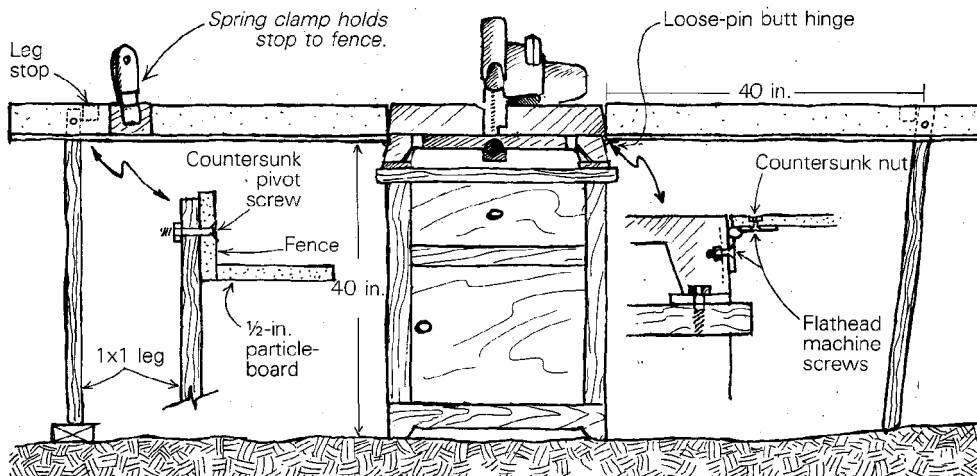
The heart of the system is a pair of extension wings that are attached to the saw with three $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. loose-pin butt hinges. The wings are built of $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. particleboard. They are about 5 in. wide and 48 in. long, with a 4-in. high fence that is edge-butt, glued and screwed. The hinges are attached to the saw's cast-iron table and the wings with flathead machine screws. The other ends of the wings are each supported by a 1x1 leg that is at-

tached to the wing fence with a single countersunk machine screw. A glued-on stop keeps each leg from opening too far.

When I arrive at a job site, I first set up the saw and its cabinet, and then I slide the hinge pins in place to connect the wings. To get them level, I eyeball down the wings and across the saw table. I adjust them either by shimming the legs or swinging one of them back out of plumb.

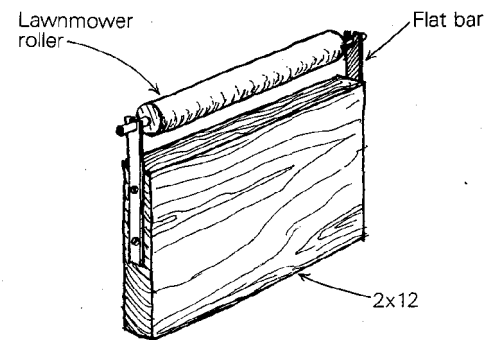
This arrangement is very simple to adjust, and it's also portable. The 10-ft. long work surface gives me enough room to handle just about any board. Its 40-in. height is easy on my back, and the wing fences are good places to clamp stops for multiple cuts under 60 in.

—Bruce Donegan, Ridgway, Colo.



Lumber roller

I use the device shown in the drawing below as an off-feed support for running long stock through my table saw. It consists of an old



lawnmower roller attached to a piece of 2x12 with two notched pieces of steel flat stock. I clamp the support in my Workmate, where I can adjust it easily for height.

—Patrick Lawson, Sooke, B.C.

Moving lumber

We often do large jobs far from the street, which makes lumber delivery by truck impossible. In these situations, I arrange for the lumber delivery on the day we plan to backfill. This way the lumber company drops the banded lumber alongside the street, and we have the bulldozer operator move the lumber. He can either carry the lumber in the bucket or use a chain sling. This can save you a good bit of labor.

—Patrick D. Rabbitt, Greenwich, Conn.