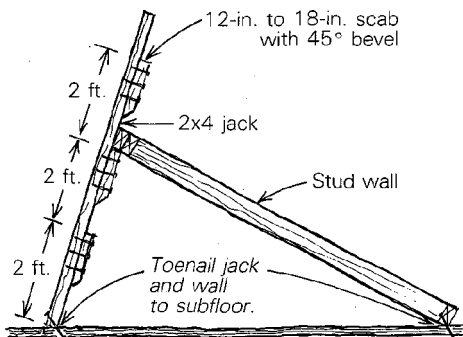


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Wall jacks

With three or four of the site-built wall jacks shown in the drawing below, a two-man crew can lift 30-ft. to 40-ft. long stud walls. Each jack



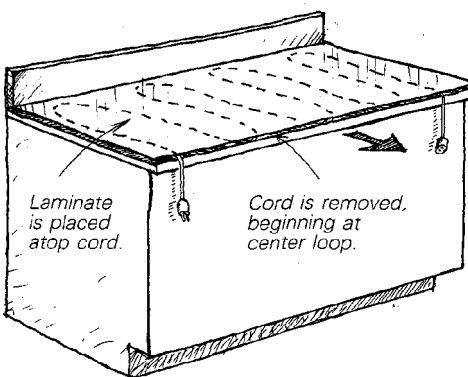
is made of a 2x4 about 7 ft. long, with three nailed-on scabs, 2 ft. apart. The scabs form ledges to support the wall as it is lifted.

With the stud wall lying flat on the subfloor and toenailed to it, toenail each jack to the floor so that its base is tight to the wall's top plate. Now begin at one end of the wall and lift it to the first notch. Move back and forth along the wall, lifting one notch at each station until you've reached the third level. From there it's an easy push to get the wall upright.

—Ed Wilson, Seattle, Wash.

Laminate spacer

On a recent kitchen remodel I found myself ready to attach the plastic laminate to the countertop with contact cement, but I didn't have my usual stack of spacers that I use to separate the counter and the laminate during alignment. In need of a handy alternative, I turned to a thin



extension cord in my kit. I found that by looping the cord across the counter, as shown, I could position the laminate, then remove the cord starting with the loop nearest the center of the counter.

—Hayes Rutherford, Coolin, Idaho

Caulk cap

There are a lot of new caulks and adhesives available in tubes these days. I've found uses for many of them, but I rarely finish a tube on one job. In fact, many tasks need only a little squirt

of some high-priced goo. Left-over tubes might just as well be tossed into the trash on the spot because the material in the tip becomes hard and unusable, rendering the rest of the contents inaccessible. A versatile and effective cap would solve the problem—and I had some in my tool box all along.

The solution is wire nuts. I use vinyl-coated red ones, which are normally used on 12-ga. wire, to cap my unspent tubes. I've found them effective for up to six months, and they can be constantly reused and easily replaced.

—Joe Shepherd, Milwaukie, Ore.

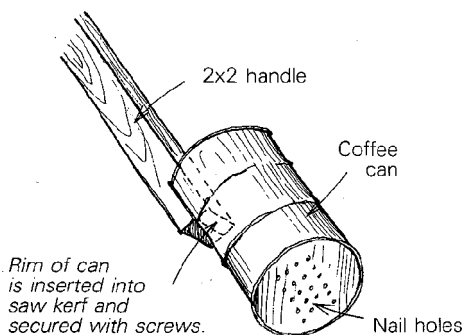
Stain removal

Unfinished wood often gets stained from rusting nails, cement splashes or water leaks. Perhaps you've noticed this kind of staining around the corners of skylight wells that are lined with wood. If you need to remove such stains, try a solution of oxalic acid and water. Mix ¼ lb. of oxalic-acid crystals with 1 gal. of warm water and stir until dissolved. Paint the solution onto the stained areas and let it stand for 15 minutes. Rinse the work with cold water, and repeat if necessary. Oxalic acid is sold at chemical-supply outlets, and it is poisonous. Be sure to wear rubber gloves and eye protection when you use it.

—Ernie Alé, Santa Ana Heights, Calif.

Limeless lines

Rather than scatter handfuls of lime to mark out excavations, I use flour. It's cheaper than lime, less toxic and very available. I put the flour in a coffee can that has a grid of nail holes punched



in the bottom. To make the can easy to control, I insert the top rim of the can into a kerf cut in a 4-ft. to 5-ft. 2x2 handle. Screws secure the can to the handle.

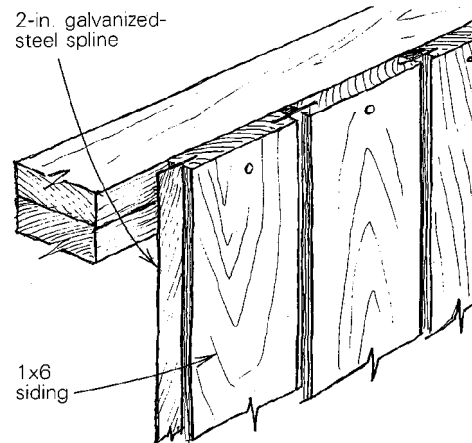
To use the tool, I let it hang loosely in one hand with the can about 6 in. from the ground. I run the handle along my dry lines, tapping it with a block or hammer to sift a line on the ground worthy of a football field.

—Eric Carter, Green Valley Lake, Calif.

Splined siding

I recently built a new workshop and I sheathed it with 1x6 boards joined with galvanized splines. I like this method because it gets the most out of the width of a board, and the splines can often be scrounged for next to nothing. I used 2-in. wide galvanized steel that is commonly used here in Australia for strapping together large shipments of bulky goods. Thin strips of nylon or plastic could also be used.

My wall framing consists of 4x4s on 8-ft. centers, with plates at top and bottom and a mid-



rail. I ran each piece of siding over my table saw to cut a 1-in. deep kerf in each edge. Once I had a board in place, I inserted a full-length spline into the kerf, as shown above. The neighboring board accepts the protruding spline, and so forth. I kept the nails away from the splines, and left a little play between adjacent boards to allow for expansion of the wood.

—Jonathan Davies, Queensland, Australia

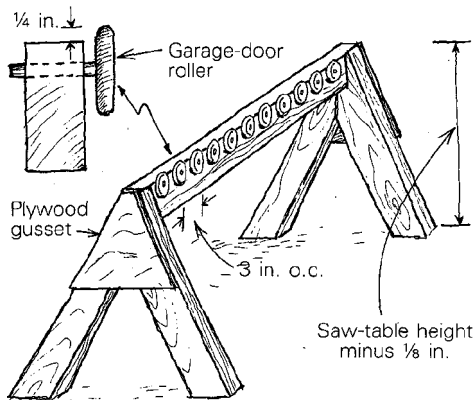
Nailbag liners

I save half-gallon milk cartons, cut them in half, and use them for nail containers. Their 4-in. by 4-in. size fits nicely into the large bag on my nail pouch. When I'm done with one kind of nail, I remove the carton from the pouch and return it to its storage cabinet. This practice keeps the number of miscellaneous nails in my pouch from getting out of hand.

—Sam Francis, Bozeman, Mont.

Outboard-roller stand

One of the most awkward operations to perform in my tiny one-man cabinet shop is crosscutting a full sheet of plywood. The outboard roller stand shown in the drawing, below has made this task a lot easier for me. The roller stand is essentially a sawhorse with a row of garage-door rollers mounted 3 in. on center across the length of the crossbar. I made my stand out of 2x4 stock, screwed and glued together for rigidity and braced at the top with plywood gussets.



can push a sheet of plywood through a cut with little resistance.

—Lewis A. Locke, Ellenburg, Wash.