

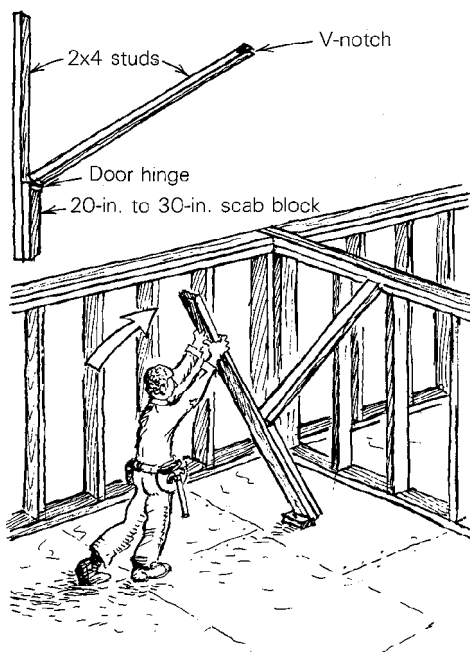
Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

The hooter stick

Plumbing and aligning stud walls can be quite a chore, sometimes involving the better part of a five or six-man crew. On a recent job, I became acquainted with the tool shown in the drawing below. Here in Austin, Tex., it's called a hooter stick, and I haven't found anything that's better suited for adjusting long, tall or just plain awkward walls.

Basically it is nothing more than two studs, a 2x4 block 20 in. to 30 in. long and an old hinge. To assemble the stick, first cut a 45° V-notch in the end of one stud and scab the block flush to the bottom end of the other stud. Then fasten the two parts with the hinge.

To use the hooter stick, place the notched end against the underside of the top plate, near



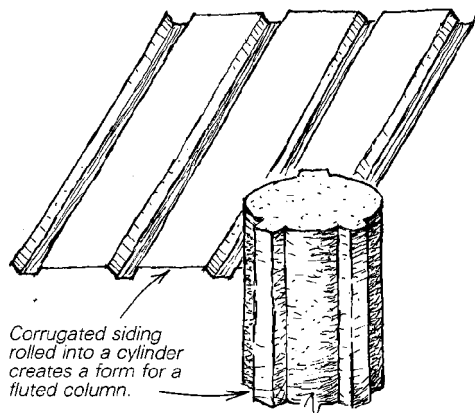
a corner or an intersection with another wall. To brace the bottom of the stick you can use either your foot or a block that is tacked to the subfloor. Now you're ready to push in the direction that you want the wall to move. The hooter is an awkward piece of equipment to manipulate at first, but once you get used to it you'll be surprised at what you can do to an outside wall full of offsets and headers.

—Paul Wilson, Austin, Tex.

Corrugated column forms

Recently I bid on a job that called for 15 concrete piers, each 30 in. high. The loads involved weren't much—about 100 lb. per pier, so the job didn't require the bearing or expense of a standard 10-in. column. In addition, large-diameter columns would have appeared too massive for the job.

I used corrugated metal siding to form these short columns. It's available in various lengths, widths and gauges. The siding I used has 1-in.



deep corrugations that are 2 in. wide, spaced 10 in. apart. When I rolled up a section of the siding, it formed a column about 8 in. in diameter with three 2-in. flutes. I held these sections fast by securing the overlapping metal with three short sheet-metal screws.

I made five forms out of this material, and made three pours with them. The siding's slick finish made for easy release from the concrete, and an attractive, smooth finish.

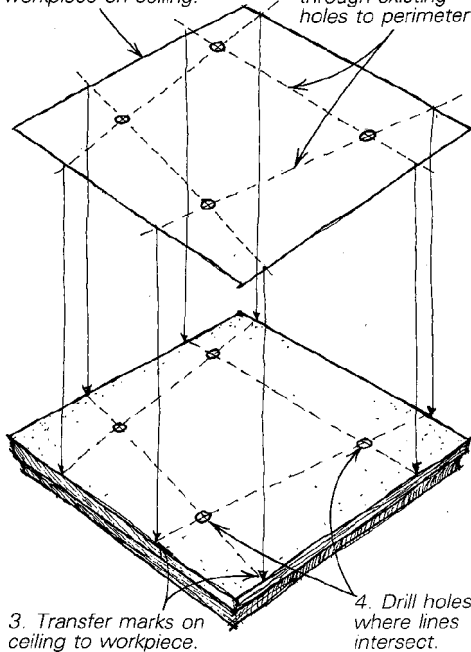
—E. L. Doonan, Aledo, Ill.

Eccentric layouts

Sam Clark's article on ticksticking (*FHB* #20) inspired this solution to a common measuring problem. I needed to mount a wooden plate from which to hang a light fixture. I wanted to use four existing holes in the ceiling, which were by no means square to each other, to mount the plate. The problem was how to mark the hole locations on the plate for drilling.

My solution, shown in the drawing below, was to hold the plate in position on the ceiling and lightly draw its perimeter. Then I removed the plate and, using a straightedge, drew four lines passing through the existing holes. These

1. Mark perimeter of workpiece on ceiling.
2. Draw lines through existing holes to perimeter.



lines extended just past the perimeter line. Next I held the plate against the ceiling and I transferred the marks onto the edge of the plate, as shown in the drawing. When I connected the marks on the plate with a straightedge, the intersections of the lines marked precisely the location of the holes.

—Barry Kline, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

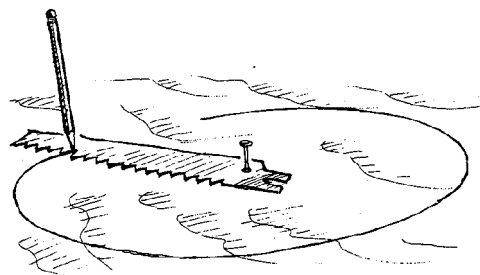
Miter-box medicine

One of the few drawbacks of the Makita power miter saw is that the space between the platen and the base gets clogged with sawdust, making it difficult to change the angle of the saw. To help solve this problem, cut a wood insert for the saw slot. Shape a small piece of pine to fit the radius on the bottom of the slot, and press-fit it in place. Then use the saw to cut a kerf in the insert. This trick will keep the sawdust out of the space under the platen, and as an added benefit, it also will reduce tearout on the bottom of your cuts.

—Ken Kellman, Ben Lomond, Calif.

Sawblade compass

As I was about to install a toilet on a recent plumbing job, I made a discovery. I needed to draw a circular outline on the subfloor for the



toilet flange, but I didn't have a compass handy. I did have my Sawzall, though. I removed its blade, and drove a nail through the hole in the blade into my center mark on the floor. With my pencil resting between two of the blade's teeth, as shown above, I was able to draw a perfect circle—just the size I needed.

—Anthony Revelli, New York, N. Y.

Varnish stilts

A drywall screw through a small square of plywood makes a handy stilt to prop up work while finish is applied. When I paint a door, for instance, I place a pair of stilts on the floor to support the door, and another one against the wall near the top of the door, as shown below.

—Michael R. Sweem, Downey, Calif.

