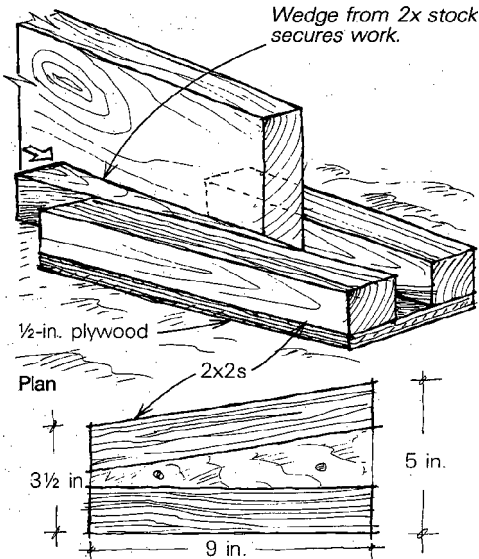


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

On-site vise

The vise shown in the drawing below is a handy and inexpensive tool for securing work up to 1¾ in. thick. It is made of 2x2s screwed and glued to a piece of ½-in. plywood. On the job site, I usually screw one to a subfloor, deck, bench or a sawhorse. The workpiece fits into the tapered slot between the 2x2s, and it's held



fast by a 2x wedge driven into the gap. To level the workpiece, I shim its other end with a piece of ½-in. plywood. This rig works especially well for planing the edges of boards.

—Carl Meinzinger, Guemes Island, Wash.

Shingle removal

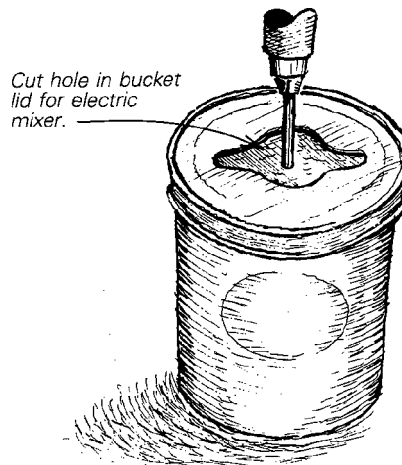
Most of the older houses where I live have asphalt shingles laid right on top of the original wooden shingles. When it's time to tear them all off in preparation for a new roof, most roofers use a flat shovel to pry off all of the old layers of shingles. This is hard, slow work because the shovel keeps ramming into the thousands of nails securing the shingles.

Instead of a shovel, I use a short-handled, four-pronged spading fork with heavy, flat tines. The tines slide around the nails instead of ramming into them. After I remove the old ridge caps, I start at the top of the roof and work across it horizontally. The constant levering action puts a fair amount of strain on the tines, so I check them occasionally to make sure they stay parallel with one another. If one gets bent out of alignment, shingles tend to get wedged between the tines. To bend the tines back in line, I use a length of ¾-in. water pipe.

—Steve Funcell, Jamestown, N. Y.

Two mixing tips

When you need to mix or thin drywall joint compound with an electric-drill mixer, save yourself some cleanup time by using a mixing cap on your 5-gal. bucket. Make the cap by cutting a hole in the lid of an extra joint-compound buck-

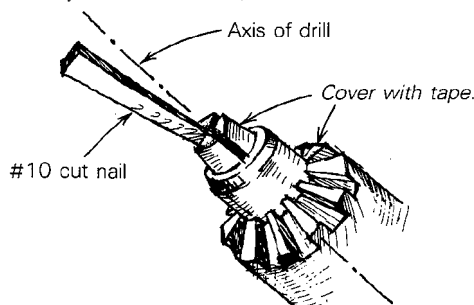


et, as shown in the drawing above. Make the opening in the center of the lid large enough to add water or joint-compound powder as you mix, and you're in business.

—William Barstow, Davis, Calif.

I frequently use liquid epoxies to repair and restore old windows and doors in my house. Since thorough mixing of the epoxy is essential, I have tried a variety of jury-rigged stirrers with my variable-speed electric drill.

I've gotten my best results by using a #10 masonry (cut) nail, chucked between two of the three jaws of the chuck, as shown in the draw-



ing. Gentle stirring of smaller volumes is best achieved by keeping the nail just a bit off axis. I get a more vigorous stirring action by moving the nail farther off its axis. In order to protect the drill chuck from epoxy spatter (which will quickly freeze the chuck), I wrap the end of the chuck with tape. A soda can, cut in half, is a very convenient container for the volume that I usually mix, and it works well with the cut nail.

—Jeff Kerbeykian, Kew Gardens, N. Y.

Flagstone template

To keep waste to a minimum when I lay a floor of irregular flagstone, I first lay the large pieces of stone without cutting any of them. Then I try to match the voids between the stones with smaller stones. The problem with this method is that the perfect puzzle pieces never seem to exist in nature, so I have to make a few of them.

To create a missing piece, I lay a piece of aluminum foil over the void and I fold back the edges until it fits the vacancy. I can also add bits of foil to the template if it's too small. When I've got it right, I carry the template to the pile of material and find the flagstone that most closely follows the lines of the foil. Then I trace around

it with a nail, and saw off the excess stone. This method also works well for finding missing stones in a rubble wall. The foil can be used over and over again, and when you're done with the wall you can use the foil to bake a potato.

—Stephen M. Kennedy, Orrtanna, Pa.

Searching for studs

While rubbing down some window trim with fine steel wool, I noticed some little black dots forming on the wall nearby. To my amazement, I discovered that some of the steel-wool particles were being attracted to the drywall screws that I had used to install the gypboard three years earlier. Evidently, the magnetic tip of my drywall screwdriver had imparted some of its magnetism to the screws. Now whenever I need to find a stud to hang a shelf or a picture, I just gently tap a piece of fine steel wool against the wall until the black dots magically appear.

—Jim Murray, Atlantic Beach, N. Y.

Boom-box deflector shield

On my job site, the work radio pulls more than its share of the load. It's the first thing plugged in and the last thing unplugged. But job sites are dangerous places for radios. They are dropped, hit by falling tools and debris and slowly suffocated by dust. To protect my new radio from these evils, I housed it in a box made of ½-in. maple plywood, shown in the drawing below.

The front of the box has a pair of grooves that house ½-in. maple plywood doors. The outer door is solid, while the inner door has cutouts that correspond with the speakers. I covered the cutouts with a tightly woven cloth to keep dust out of the speakers. Both doors have walnut pulls at one end. I lined the inside of the box with foam to keep the radio from rattling around, and I put four maple feet on the bottom of the box to minimize scratching. Access to the power cord is through a hole in the back of the box. Besides protecting my \$200 radio, the box has impressed my clients with the thoroughness of my work. —MacGill Adams, Anchorage, Alaska

