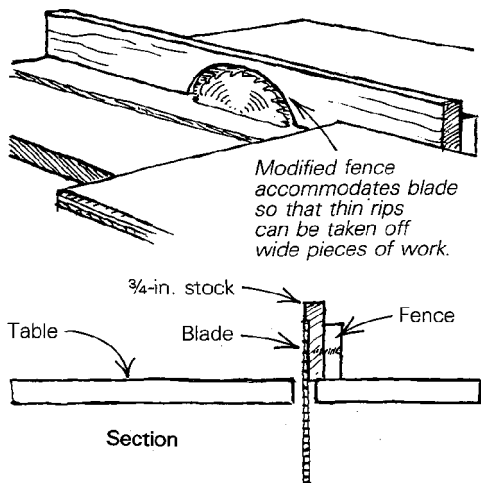


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details and sketches to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Close shaves on the table saw

Whenever I do finish carpentry on site, I use a small, portable table saw for everything from trim to cabinet work. Unfortunately, the diminutive table limits the width of the work that can be passed by the blade. Sometimes I have to take minuscule rips off the edge of a large piece of plywood, so I devised the modified fence shown in the drawing below to allow close shaves on the little saw.

To modify the fence, I screwed a 3/4-in. thick, knot-free piece of wood to the blade side of the fence, making sure that the screws were well



away from the path of the sawblade. Then with the blade lowered below the level of the table, I positioned the wood so that it was flush with the outside edge of the blade. I turned the saw on, and slowly raised the blade to full height, cutting a half-moon void in the wood fence.

I use this fence along with an 80-tooth carbide blade to take 64ths off wide stock.

—Jeffrey S. Janssen, Oakland, Calif.

Durable chalklines

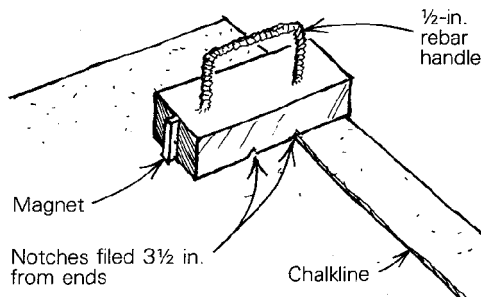
Chalk layout lines are invariably erased by brooms, rain and shoes—especially on concrete. If you like to do your layout well in advance of the work it will guide, spray the lines with polyurethane varnish or some other clear finish. The lines will stay put until you need them.

—Dennis Lamonica, Panama, N. Y.

Stringline anchor

When it comes time to frame a house, I like to do the layout by myself. The solitude affords me time to work out the kinks in the plan without being barraged by questions from the crew. The problem is, it's tough to pop chalklines on a concrete slab (the typical foundation in my area) when you're working alone.

I solved the problem by getting a heavy piece of steel at a local scrapyard and welding a handle to it so I can lug it around more easily. This brick-size hunk of metal weighs about 20 lb., and it has no trouble anchoring the dumb end of a string line or steel tape. As shown in the



drawing above, I affixed a bar magnet to one end of the anchor to secure the hook on a steel tape. Also, I filed notches along the edges of the anchor, 3 1/2 in. from the ends. When the end of the anchor is flush with the edge of the slab, either notch can be used to anchor my chalkline for a 2x4 layout.

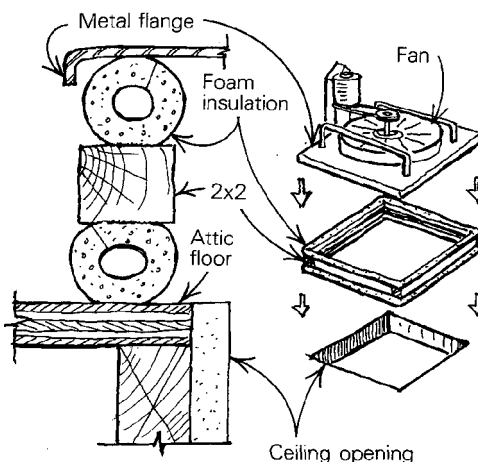
Because of its mass and sharp angles, the anchor sometimes gets used as a job-site anvil. It is also useful for tying up the dog when necessary.

—Don Huebner, Austin, Tex.

A quieter fan

In the dead of a hot summer night, when I'm trying to fall asleep, the last thing I want to hear is the whole-house fan in our attic resonating throughout the house. To quiet the thing down, I made the sound-deadening mount shown in the drawing below.

At the heart of the mount is a 2x2 frame, which is sized to match the base of our fan. To the top and bottom of the frame, I glued hollow,



1 1/2-in. OD pipe insulation. This is the foamy, pliable pipe wrap used to insulate water supply pipes. I used solvent-based contact cement to affix it to the 2x2s.

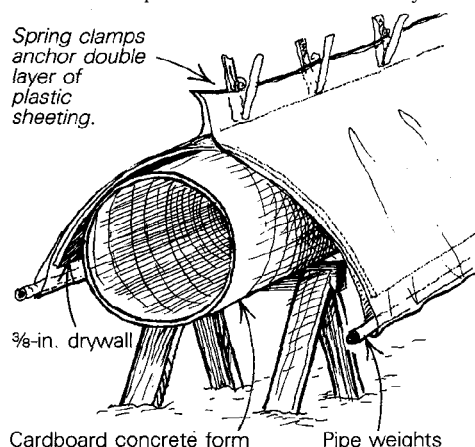
I replaced the stock plenum that came with the fan with this homemade frame. The fan simply rests on it. I don't have any scientific data to point to, but I estimate that the foam insulation has cut down the fan's hum and rumble by at least two-thirds.

—Robert M. Vaughan, Roanoke, Va.

Bending drywall

When I had to bend some 3/8-in. drywall into sections for a coved ceiling, I hunted around for some readily available materials that could serve as a bending form and a press to apply even pressure to the panels. I found a 10-ft. long, 20-in. dia. concrete column form, and propped

it up outdoors on sawhorses. This became my bending form. I centered a piece of drywall on it, finished side down, and sprayed water on its back. Then I arranged a heavy plastic tarp over the panel, as shown in the drawing below. I doubled the plastic so that it could carry 3/4-in.



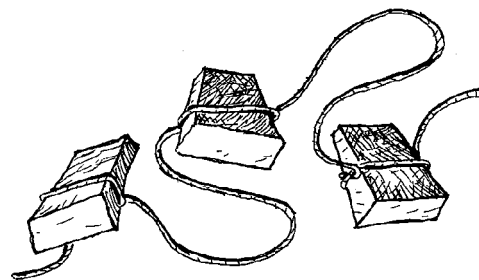
steel water pipes, which hung down at the sides of the form and applied the necessary pressure to persuade the drywall into its arc. Where the edges of the plastic came together, I held them fast with spring clamps.

I had to wet the panels every few hours to get them to bend, but bend they did. When they took on the correct curve, I pulled away the plastic and let them dry until stiff.

I installed the curved pieces of drywall in a double layer, using panel adhesive to laminate them. The resulting cove didn't need curved wooden backing, and it took very little mud to feather the separate pieces into a continuous curved surface. —Bruce Misfeldt, St. Louis, Mo.

Stringing wedges

Like Benny Soto (*FHB* #35, pp. 35-37), I use steel wedges to split sandstone boulders into building blocks. But our leafy groundcover sometimes makes it tough to find the wedges after a cut. To make sure I don't have to spend



time on my hands and knees hunting for them, I tied my wedges into a necklace like the one in the drawing. —Gary Loomis, Mendocino, Calif.

Painted-trim prep

Sometimes when a house interior needs repainting, the woodwork is too rough to take a new coat of paint, but not bad enough to warrant stripping. Under these circumstances, I prepare the woodwork by using a sponge, a bucket of water, a scrub brush and some wet/dry sandpaper. I keep the sandpaper and work surface wet throughout the process, and I use my hands or

TIPS & TECHNIQUES

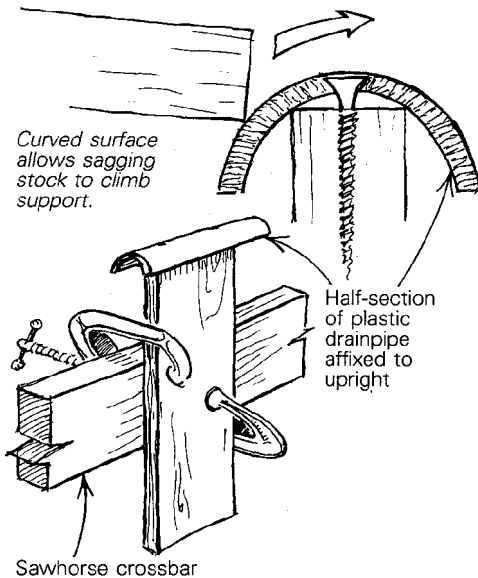
the sponge as a sanding pad. I find that the paper will last up to an hour if I periodically use the brush to scrub the paper in the bucket.

Using this wet process keeps the dust suspended in the water rather than in the air. The resulting surface is quite smooth to the touch, but it still has the necessary roughness for good paint adhesion. I've used this technique with old oil-base and water-base paints with equally good results. —*John Glenn, Brookline, Mass.*

Low-budget outfeed support

Roller supports are handy items to have around the workshop or the job site, and like C-clamps you can never have too many of them. Unfortunately, they are not cheap. To make some low-budget versions, I use plastic drainpipe offcuts screwed to wooden uprights. Then I clamp them to sawhorse crossbars at the desired height.

As shown in the drawing, I use a piece of pipe that has been cut in half lengthwise for the sliding surface of the support. For 3-in. pipe, a 2x upright will do. For smaller pipe, use 1x stock. Affix the pipe to the upright with countersunk



flathead screws. In use, the plastic pipe offers very little resistance to a piece of stock sliding across it, and it will even allow a piece of stock with some sag in it to climb the curved surface.

—*Bob VonDrachek, Missoula, Mont.*

String snare

The time-honored way to connect stereo speakers or TV antennae is to drill a small hole in the floor, and then run the wires across the basement ceiling. That's fine if you've got a basement, but my house has a 2-ft. high crawl space that is a tapestry of cobwebs and spiders. Rather than crawling 12 ft. to reach the hole in the floor, I put my chimney-cleaning brush to work.

I pushed a length of string through the hole so that it dangled below the floor. Then I attached the brush to a 15-ft. long fiberglass pole and snagged the string in its bristles. After a couple of twists, I had the string firmly entangled. After I pulled it in, I used the string to pull a speaker wire to its final destination.

—*Bruce Knott, Grand Haven, Mich.*