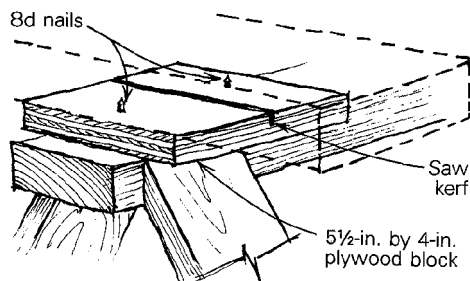


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange information about the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Sawhorse anchors

When I have to rip long pieces of 2x framing lumber with a circular saw, I use a pair of 3/4-in. plywood blocks to help me secure the work. The blocks are the same width as the lumber being cut. For instance, the 5 1/2-in. block shown in the drawing below is for a 2x6. I tack each block to a sawhorse with two 8d nails, leaving the head of the nail about 1/4 in. above the block. Then I snip each nail head off with a pair of side cutters. This leaves about 1/8 in. of nail shank protruding from the block. These protrusions are sharp enough to penetrate a piece of softwood, and long enough to hold it in place while I make my

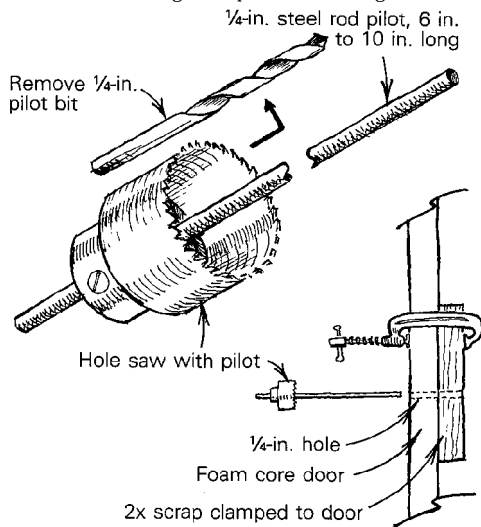


rip cuts. I set the blade depth so the cut enters the block, but not the sawhorse.

—P. J. Woychick, Boise, Idaho

Drilling foam-core steel doors

I had to drill holes for deadbolt locks in some steel doors that had foam cores, and I almost destroyed the first couple of doors using a standard hole saw because the 1/4-in. pilot bit would wander off course in the soft foam. To remedy the situation, I removed the pilot bit and replaced it with a piece of 1/4-in. mild-steel rod, as shown in the drawing. To use the modified saw, I first drilled a 1/4-in. pilot hole through the door and a 2x block clamped to the door. Using the pilot hole to guide the



steel rod, I cut my holes with no wobble and no tearout. Incidentally, for this work I found that a bi-metal hole saw held its edge better than one made of steel.

—E. F. Bott Jr., Troy, N. Y.

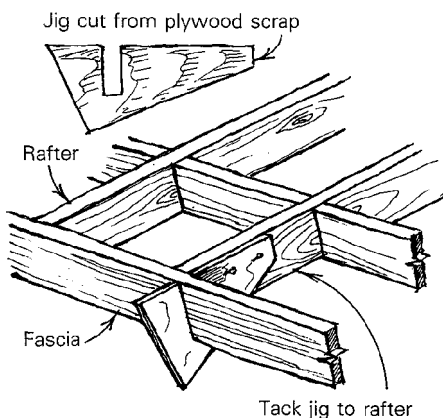
Caulk-tube cap

Instead of plugging a partially used tube of caulk with a nail, or capping it with a wire nut, I keep the remaining contents from hardening with a piece of Romex wire sheathing. First I pull the wire out of a 5 in. or 6 in. Romex off-cut. Then I shove the plastic sheath over the caulk-tube nozzle and pump a little caulk into the sheath. When I pull it off the nozzle weeks later, the rest of the caulk in the tube is still fresh. The sheathing also works as a nozzle extension for getting at hard-to-reach crevices.

—G. Morrison, Spring Mills, Pa.

Hanging fascia boards

It usually takes two people to hang fascia boards. Even then it can be pretty precarious out there on the end of a rafter, straining to support a heavy fascia board with one hand, while trying to line up a mitered corner and



sink a galvanized 16d nail with the other hand. With the help of the simple jig in the drawing above, even one person can do it.

I tack one jig near each end of the fascia. I drive the nails just far enough to support the weight of the fascia. Then I lower the fascia into the slots in the jigs (the slots should be a little oversize to prevent binding). The jigs hold the fascia in approximately the right place while I adjust it for alignment and nail it in place.

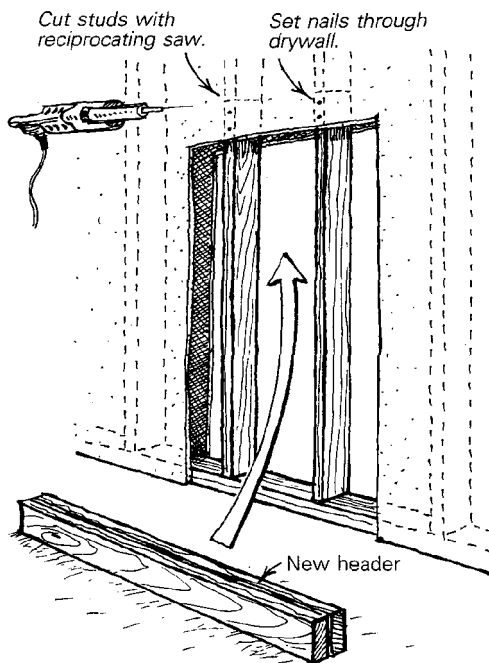
—Neal Bahrman, Ventura, Calif.

Header implant

Not long ago my partner and I were working on a remodel that included putting in a new doorway through an existing wall. I was grumbling about what a pain it was because we'd have to cut out the extra drywall over the door and then turn around and patch it back in after installing the header. My partner gave me that superior look of "one-who-knows" and told me to watch.

First he cut out the drywall on both sides of the wall to the rough opening of the door. Then, with a 1/4-in. punch, he set any drywall nails that were within 6 in. of the top of the opening, driving them through the drywall and into the studs. Next, he fired up his reciprocating

saw and, piercing the drywall, cut off the studs 5 1/2 in. above the rough opening (drawing below). After removing these studs, we



slipped our header into the wall, followed by our trimmers.

We toenailed everything with 16d casing nails set through the drywall. To finish up, all we had to do was to fill a few holes and cuts, rather than having to mud and tape in a whole new chunk of drywall.

—Tim Pelton, Fairfield, Iowa

Matching moldings

When remodeling, sometimes you need a short piece of trim that is no longer available at the lumberyard. Take a look in the closets—you might find just enough to suit your needs.

—Craig Horstmeier, Davis, Ill.

Honing glass

In John Lively's excellent treatise on grinding and honing edge tools (*FHB* #18, pp. 56-61), he argues for more skill and fewer gadgets. Lively mentions using wet-dry sandpaper for honing, but does not suggest using a hard surface as a flat for the sandpaper. For years I've honed edges with mixed results, until I switched to a glass mounted on a wood base.

My glass is 1/4 in. thick by 6 in. sq. The glass shop charged \$3.50 for it, which included polishing the edges. The 3/4-in. pine base is 6 1/2 in. by 12 in., with three birch dowels through the width to minimize warping. Four slender cleats at one end of the base frame the glass, without protruding above its surface. The remaining half of the base provides purchase for clamps.

I painted the base with three coats of oil-based enamel, and then set the glass in its frame with silicone adhesive. This makes the base waterproof and easy to clean under the tap.

To sharpen my edge tools, I cut pieces of 240-, 320- and 600-grit wet/dry sandpaper, and

use them as seems appropriate to the edge I need. Used wet, the paper stays on the glass quite well, and I often use it on my kitchen counter next to the sink. For polishing an edge, I've found that auto rubbing compound (both red and white) also works well on the glass.

—Norin A. Elfton, Lakewood, Colo.

Paint-tray liners

The big plastic bags that are being used nowadays by grocery and discount stores fit nicely over a 9-in. paint tray, making a durable liner that keeps cleanup time to a minimum. You do, however, need to be sure to turn a printed bag inside out because the ink can contaminate your paint. In my experience, the bag-liners work well with latex and oil-based paints.

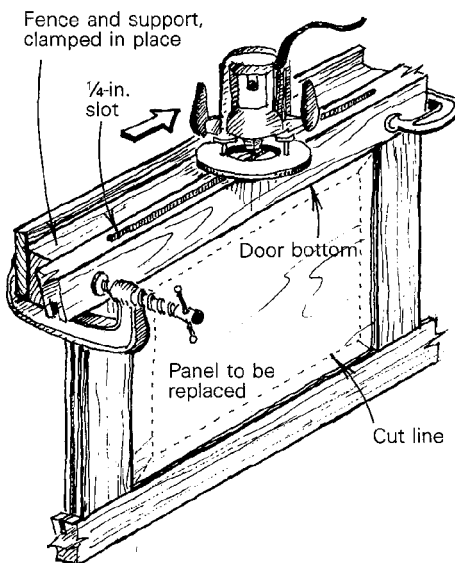
—Kenneth G. Warr, Trussville, Ala.

Replacing garage door panels

My frame-and-panel garage door had a nasty gouge in one of the bottom panels. My job was to figure out a way to remove the 1/4-in. thick panel without ruining the rest of the door. To do so, I turned to my router.

After removing the door and placing the damaged panel upside-down, I clamped a 2x support adjacent to the bottom frame, as shown in the drawing above right. Next I used a plunge router fitted with a 1/4-in. straight-flute bit to make a slot in the door bottom. I had to make the slot about 1 in. deep to get to the panel,

and I made my passes in 1/4-in. deep increments to avoid overloading the router or straining the bit. Slot cut, I ran my jig saw



around the perimeter of the damaged panel, cutting it into easily removable pieces.

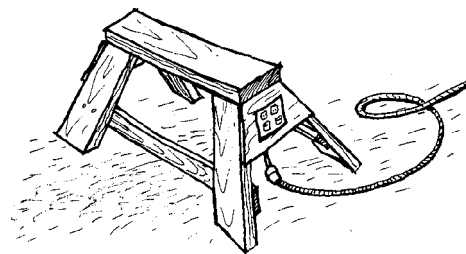
To finish the job, I slid the new panel in place through the slot in the bottom of the door. Then I filled the slot with a glued-in-

place piece of 1/4-in. stock.

—Elliot Eisenberg, Conyngham, Pa.

Wired sawhorse

I've attached a weathertight, four-outlet box to the gusseted end of my sawhorse, as shown in the drawing below. This solves the problem

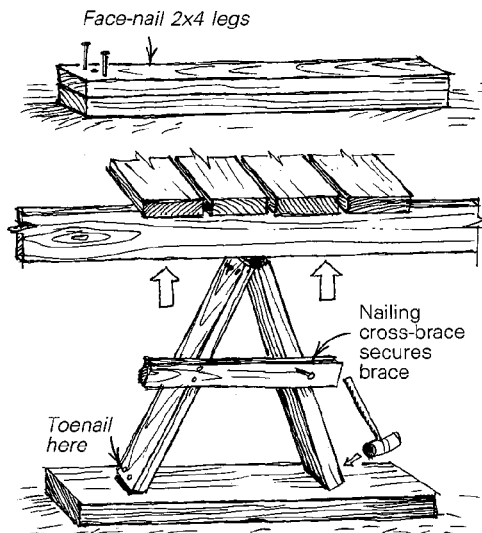


of getting entangled in extension cords. Now I only need one cord to serve up to four power tools without having to unplug one, then another one, and another, and so on.

—Paul Dostie, Brunswick, Me.

The A-brace

I needed to lift a section of decking that had subsided a couple of inches, and I didn't have a jack handy to bear the considerable weight. Instead, I made an A-brace, as shown in the drawing next page, out of a couple of short



lengths of 2x4 and a 1x brace.

To make the A-brace, face-nail a pair of 2x4s at one end with three 16d nails through each side. The 2x4s should be 2 in. to 3 in. longer than the height you want to reach. Spread the unnailed ends of the 2x4s so that they form an inverted V beneath the appropriate beam and toenail one of the 2x4 legs to a secure 2x6 or 2x8 base. Forcing the legs together raises the load. Toenailing the other

leg to the base, along with a cross-brace, secures it.

—Gerry Magid, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Rolling rocks

Whenever I have to move heavy rocks as I go about my business as a stonemason, I reach for my rollers. I used to put pipes or dowels under the rocks to roll them from place to place, but I found that even a small pebble would put the skids on progress. My local wrecking yard held the solution—coil springs from old pickup trucks. They will roll easily across a stony surface, pushing aside any pebbles that get in the way. It's good to have four coils for stone moving. Put the last one back in front when the stone rolls beyond it.

—Stephen Kennedy, Biglerville, Pa.

Stud finding

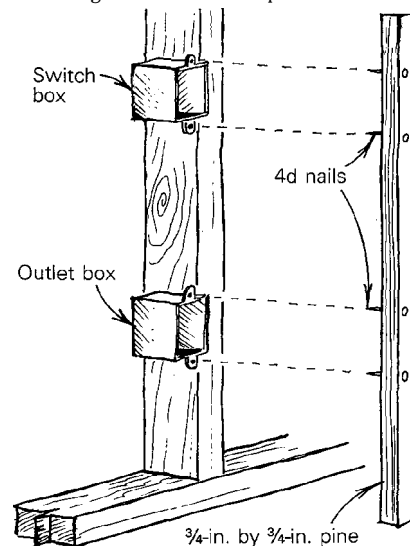
When trying to find a stud in a wall, get down on your knees and look at the baseboards. In addition to being nailed to the sole plate, baseboards are typically nailed to the studs. By examining the baseboards you can almost always find where the nail holes have been filled.

—John E. Schafer, Columbia, S. C.

Electrician's stick

The next time you have to affix electrical boxes to stud framing for switches or outlets, try using the jig shown in the drawing above right to posi-

tion the boxes. I make the jig out of a strip of 3/4-in. by 3/4-in. pine. Two pairs of 4d nails driven through the stick correspond to the thread-



ed holes in the boxes. To use the stick, position the boxes over the nails and place the stick on the floor adjacent to the stud. Now you can nail the box to the stud, and the height will be right every time.

—Santo A. Inserra, Jamestown, N. Y.