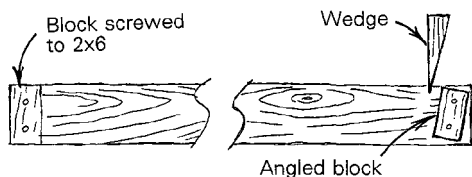


Tips and Techniques is a forum for readers to exchange information about the methods, tools and jigs they've devised. We'll pay for any we publish. Send details to Tips, Fine Homebuilding, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

Site-built bar clamp

When I found myself in need of a few extra bar clamps, I took a tip from the flooring profession, a line of work with practitioners who are constantly using wedges to force together pieces of wood. I screwed a wood block to both ends of a relatively straight 2x6 (drawing below). One block is perpendicular to the

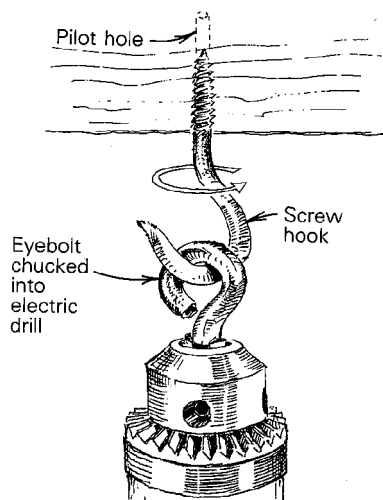


edge of the 2x6, the other at a slight angle. Then I cut a wedge to match the angle of the second block, and had an instant bar clamp.

—Chris Petersen, Storrs, Conn.

Driving screw hooks

The next time you have to drive a screw hook into a piece of wood, drill a pilot hole and then chuck an eyebolt into your variable-speed electric drill. Once you've got the screw hook started into the hole, you can slip the eyebolt over the hook, as shown in the drawing below, and use the drill on low rpm to drive home the



hook. I've used this method to drive 3/8-in. by 3-in. hooks in just a few seconds.

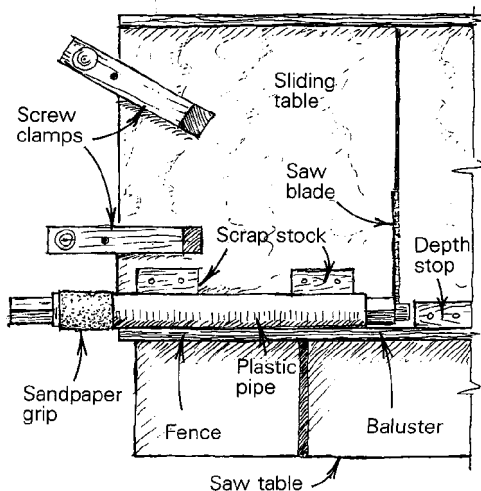
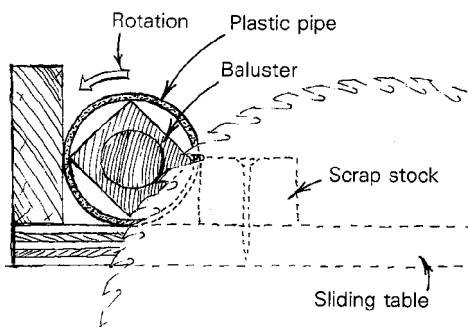
—John Zouch, Chicago, Ill.

Round tenons on the table saw

The article in *FHB* #53 on table-saw jigs (pp. 58-61) reminded me of a technique I discovered for my sliding table. A quick way to make round tenons on square baluster stock is to clamp the sliding table down and screw on some scrap stock to guide a length of plastic pipe toward the saw blade (drawings next column). The pipe should be of a diameter that tightly holds the baluster by way of friction.

By adjusting the blade height I can control the diameter of the tenon. To cut the tenon, I simultaneously rotate the plastic pipe the same direction as the saw blade and ease the pipe toward the depth stop.

A thick carbide blade should be used for this operation. And a piece of sandpaper taped to the pipe will provide a sure grip as



you turn the pipe. Finding pipe of the right diameter can be tricky. In one case I used a fishing-rod tube and sanded the corners of the baluster stock to achieve the right fit.

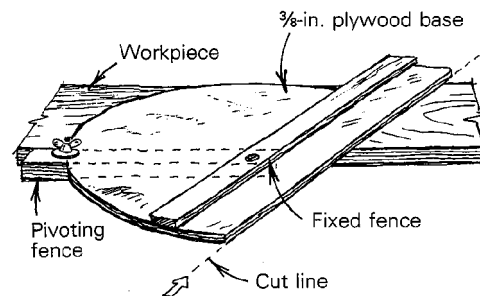
—Lauren C. Watson, Newport, N. Y.

Adjustable cutoff fixture

I had to cut some acute angles on 11-in. wide, 16-ft. long oak planks. Rather than haul them back to the shop to use the radial-arm saw, I devised the cutting fixture shown in the drawing above right. It's basically a big version of the metal saw protractors I'd seen in mail-order catalogs, but the materials were practically free, and I didn't have to wait for the mail carrier to bring it.

The 3/8-in. plywood base is 32 in. long. I made the distance from its right edge to the fence a little wider than the distance from the edge of my saw's base to the blade. I used a fine-tooth blade to trim off the extra plywood with my circular saw, using the fence to guide the cut. That made the right edge of the base parallel with the fence. Cuts are aligned on this edge.

The circular portion of the plywood base has a 13 1/2-in. radius. A 1x2 fence that pivots

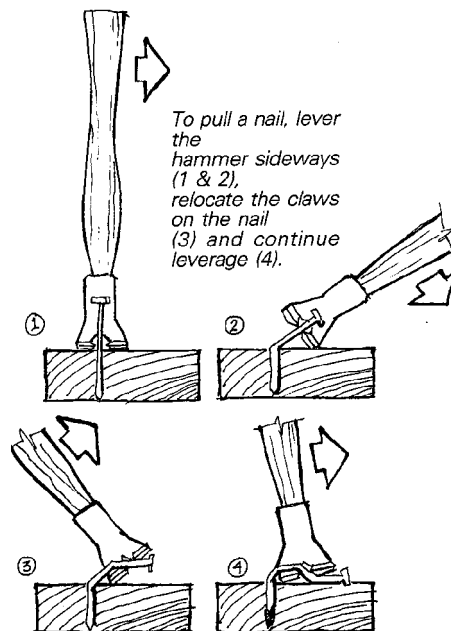


on a machine screw is mounted under the fixture. I covered the edge of the pivoting fence that bears against the workpiece with a strip of sandpaper to keep the jig from slipping off its layout line. Once I've got the angle between the pivoting fence and saw-guide where I want it, I secure the fence to the base with a wingnut over a big washer.

—Brad Schwartz, Santa Ana, Calif.

Pulling nails revisited

Dick Haward's tip on pulling nails in the December/January issue (*FHB* #50, p. 30) is a good one, but it can be carried further. Sometimes the hammer claws will not grip the nail tightly enough to avoid slipping as pressure is applied (steps 1 and 2, drawing below). To finish the job, relocate the hammer claws on opposite sides of the nail (step 3) and re-apply pressure, locking the nail into



the claws and lifting it out (step 4). This works especially well in the case of a nail that has "lost its head."

—Ryan Nevins, Venice, Calif.

Carrying doors

One day when I was an apprentice, I was complaining about having to hand-carry some solid-core doors down a long corridor. The superintendent, an old carpenter, looked at me with an air of disbelief. "Don't tell me you call yourself a carpenter when

you don't even know how to carry a door," he said.

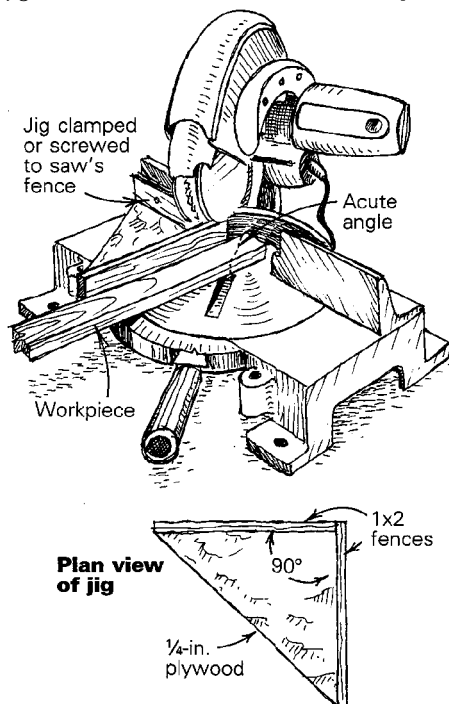
Then he put his back against one of the doors, bent his knees just a little bit, and with his arms stretched down, he grabbed the door, leaned forward and walked away with the door more or less on his back. Ever since, that's the way I carry heavy doors, and so does everyone else to whom I show the trick.

—Robert Doucet, Montreal, Quebec

Acute angles on the chop saw

A couple of years ago I was doing some trim with my friend Marcos Bradley. He was running base around a series of odd angles—angles he couldn't readily cut with his chop saw. After some thought he assembled a jig similar to the one shown in the drawing below.

Use clamps or screws to secure one of the jig's fences to the saw's fence. Clamp the



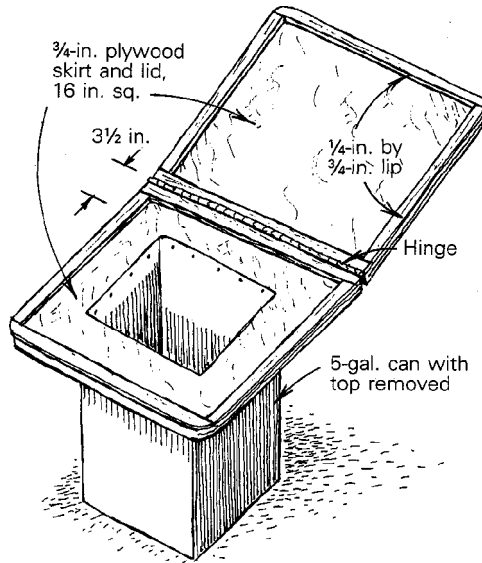
workpiece to the jig (block under the far end of long pieces) and you're all set to cut accurate acute angles.

—M. Felix Marti, Monroe, Ore.

Glue bucket

Applying contact cement to laminate work can be a messy proposition. Here's how I keep it under control. I cut the top off of a square 5-gal. can (the kind used for some solvents), and attach a hinged lid and a wood apron, as shown in the drawing above right. The apron stiffens the cut end of the can, and it's important to include the small strips of wood that act as lips for the lid, otherwise the inevitable drips will glue the lid shut. Because the lips meet with such a small surface area, it's easy to pry them apart.

I use a roller to apply the cement because it allows me to spread it quickly and evenly. The flat inner sides of this glue bucket provide a surface to roll off the excess glue if necessary.



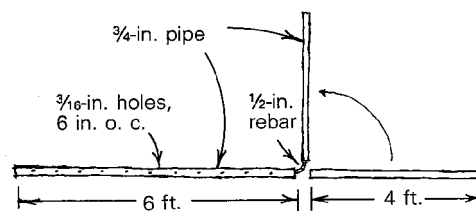
I use a special roller cover (available from most laminate dealers) that resists the deteriorating effects of the glue solvents. I find that as long as the glue in the bucket covers the roller, and it isn't allowed to dry out, I can keep the roller in the bucket indefinitely.

—Jim Fish, Dale, Tex.

Homemade rebar bender

Recently I was forming footings for an addition and needed to rent a bender to put angles in the 1/2-in. rebar. It wasn't available at the local yard, so I improvised the simple tool shown in the drawing below. It works well enough that for me, renting rebar benders is a thing of the past.

My bender consists of two pieces of 3/4-in. steel pipe—one 6 ft. long, the other 4 ft. long.



In use, the 6-ft. length stays on the ground; the 4-ft. length is the lever. If I'm bending special pieces, I measure the rebar from end to bend, mark it, and slide the pipe over the rebar until the mark is between the two pipes. Lifting on the lever to the desired angle makes the bend.

For repetitive bends, I drilled a series of 3/16 in. diameter holes, 6 in. apart, in the 6-ft. length of pipe. An 8d duplex nail in one of the holes serves as a stop.

—Dan Jensen, Tigard, Ore.

Salad-oil solvent

Last summer, while taking a lunch break from staining shingles, I noticed that the oil from my potato chips was dissolving the stain still on my hands after I had washed them with paint thinner and scrubbed them with detergent. Reflecting on how many solvents warn against prolonged skin contact, I decided to

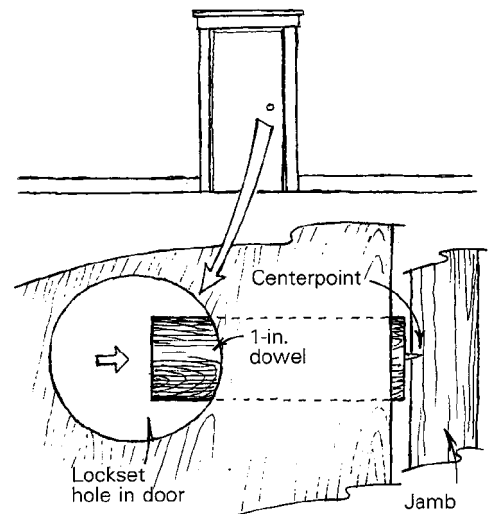
pack some olive oil in a squeeze bottle. Using the oil to dilute the stain, followed by a scrub with a handful of sandy loam and some water, left my hands as clean as my partner's paint-thinner-cleaned hands.

—Duff Bogen, Providence, R. I.

Locating latches

Here's a fast, accurate method that I use for locating the centerpoints for door latch and dead-bolt mortises. First I center a hole for a 6d nail in the end of a short piece of dowel (a 1-in. dia. dowel for a typical lockset). Then I drive the nail partway into the hole, cut it off and sharpen the remaining shank to a point.

After boring the holes for the lockset in the door's stile, I insert the dowel into the hole that will contain the latch tube, as shown in

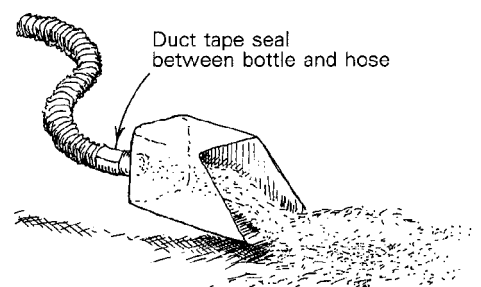


the drawing above. Then I close the door, and simply push the dowel marker toward the jamb. The sharpened nail marks the exact centerpoint for my latch or bolt hole.

—Bernard H. King, Mechanicville, N. Y.

Shop-vacuum nozzle

I do a lot of interior finish work. Sometimes the owners have already taken up residence, and the dust and chips created by my work can be a real nuisance. To gather up the mess that I make, I've been using a plastic bottle as a nozzle. As shown in the drawing below, I cut the bottom off the bottle and angle the sides up-



ward to resemble a scoop. Affixed to the hose with some duct tape, the scoop lets me easily pick up big and small debris at the same time.

—Michael Sweem, San Francisco, Calif.