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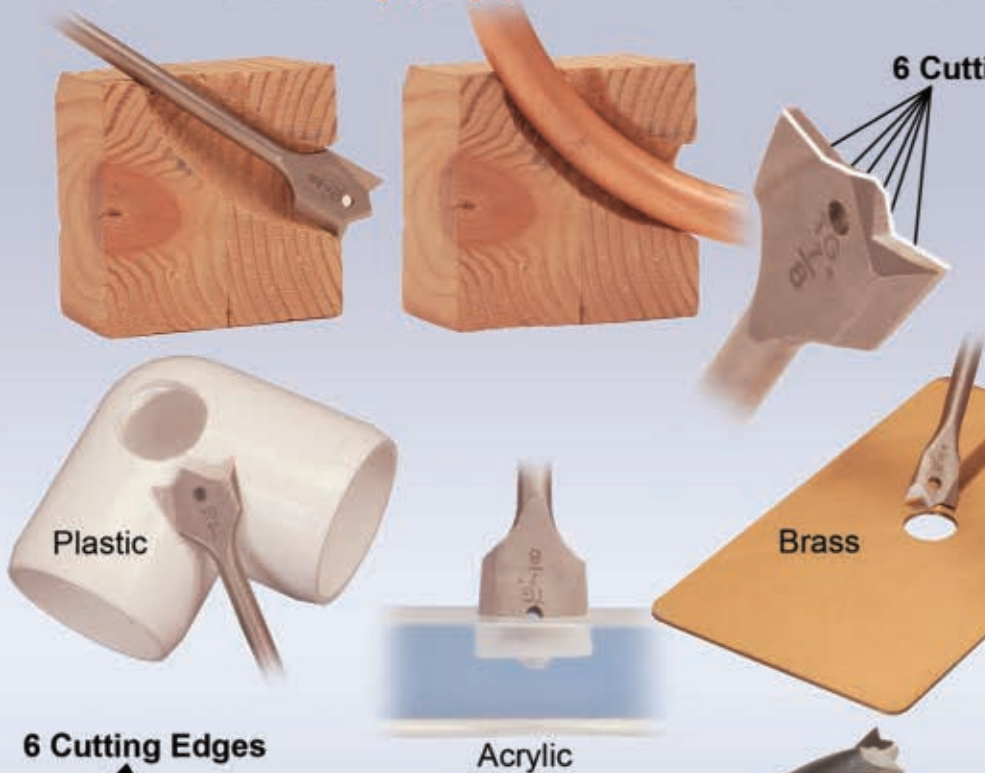


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CONTENTS

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FEATURES

34 Installing an Electric Snow Melting System

Keep walkways clean and safe in the winter months.

54 2013 International Builders' Show Preview

Take a sneak peek at new construction products.

60 Crossing Over

Building a bridge for a volunteer project demonstrates DIY takeaways for every project.

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CONTENTS

EVERY ISSUE

- 8 From the Editor**
 - 95 Advertisers Index**
- ## COLUMNS
- 10 Q & A**
 - 14 Tool School**
Lay a Better Bead
 - 28 Material Market**
Weather-ready Curb Appeal

DEPARTMENTS

- 74 Project Next**
Know Your Central Heating Systems
- 82 Skill Savvy**
12 Common Painting Pitfalls
- 88 Spotlight**
Gentle Destruction
- 92 Hot Products**

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Welcome to the 2013 International Builders Show Preview Edition of *Extreme How-To*. The preview is something new for us, as we have traditionally published a review of the show in the months to follow. But with high hopes of a national housing recovery on the horizon, we thought a sneak peek at the biggest show in the industry might help generate some enthusiasm. At least it couldn't hurt.

The International Builders' Show (IBS) is the largest annual home construction show in the world. This year it's held January 22-24 in Las Vegas, Nevada (where everything stays when it happens). The 2013 show promises "miles and miles of the latest and most advanced building products and services ever assembled." You want tools? You got 'em. Materials? Done. Thousands of attendees will cruise the convention floor to check out the most cutting-edge construction technologies, from roofs to foundations and everything in between. IBS is a must-see event for the professional builder to discover the products and services that end up in the homes they construct, and each year the *EHT* staff not only attends the show but also exhibits our magazine to the masses.

We also get early notice on some of the wares to be shared, so we decided to give our readers an early look at what to expect. Check out this issue's special IBS product preview to see a truck full of new items that will soon be seen at your local home-improvement store. But that's not all. You'll also find a number of IBS participants throughout the issue, like the rustic synthetic trim from Fypon that is profiled in this

month's Material Market department. Plus, we Spotlight a cool new demolition product from exhibitor Ecobust, which allows you to demolish concrete with a "soft touch."

I hope you enjoy this issue, and you can send your feedback on the preview to mweber@latitude3.com. In the meantime, good luck with your projects, and maybe we'll see you in Vegas.



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Q&A Got a?

Questions About Home Building, Remodeling? Have Your Own How-To Tip? Visit our blog at blog.extremehowto.com and click on Ask Our Experts.

Q: What is a ductless mini-split system for HVAC in homes?

A: A ductless mini-split system is a heating/cooling system comprised of an indoor evaporator and an outdoor condensing unit. The evaporator is connected to the condensing unit by copper tubing and electrical wiring which is passed through a 2-1/2-in. to 3-in. hole. Basically, it's like a small central air unit with the flexibility of cooling or heating one room or more, much in the same way that you might use a window unit. Mini-split systems locate the noisy compressor and condenser outside the house, like conventional HVAC systems, but they eliminate the need for bulky ductwork by using thin copper. Because there are no ducts, mini-split systems lose less than 5 percent cooling vs. up to 40 percent for conventional forced-air systems. Furthermore, a window A/C unit makes it easy for intruders to enter your home, whereas the mini-split evaporators mount high on a wall, away from the window, providing improved security and a more pleasant view.

Q: Why are there faded areas on the carpeting around the windows on one side of my house?

A: This is probably a sign of damage from ultraviolet rays. The house likely has more intense exposure to the sun on one side of your home, and the UV rays are entering through your windows or doors. You may want to consider replacement with more energy-efficient windows that contain Low-E coatings on the glass to inhibit the transfer of UV rays. Otherwise, protect the carpet with blinds or shutters.

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THERMA-TRU
DOORS

Q: I would like to build a small utility shed. What would be the easiest method for a first-time DIY'er to construct a roof?

A: For a small outbuilding, you might consider a simple shed roof, also called a lean-to roof. A shed roof is essentially one half of a gable roof that has a single, shallow slope. Both ends of the roof rest on top plates, so marking and cutting the rafters is easy.

Construction basically requires that you determine the rafter lengths, lay out the pitch and calculate the overhangs. Cut bird's mouth notches in the rafters to seat them on the top plates, and toe-nail them securely with 16d nails.

Q: Can I glue down a resilient vinyl floor directly to an Oriented Strand Board (OSB) subfloor?

A: This is not recommended. Subfloors such as OSB usually require nominal 1/4-in. or thicker underlayment panels for glue-down floors. OSB is made up of different wood chips, and there are different grades (smoothness) of panels. When gluing directly to OSB, the chips can swell at different rates and telegraph through the vinyl flooring. At the tongue-and-groove joints of the OSB, you can also see buckling as the subfloor reacts to seasonal change. Plus, some OSB panels are manufactured with a moisture-resistant resin to which adhesives do not easily bond. **EHT**

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Lay a Better Bead



Masking caulk joints with painter's tape is an easy way to minimize mess during application.

acrylic caulk is primarily decorative and not intended to serve as a sealant.

These days, many caulk/sealant products come in hybrid formulations containing some of the attributes of both silicone and acrylic, meaning they can be cleaned or tooled more easily, remain flexible, can be painted and still retain a waterproof seal. Complicating the selection further is the advent of high-end water-based caulk/sealants that have similar hybrid properties.

The easiest way to parse the options is to pay close attention to the indications on the packaging, making sure they match the job at hand. For example, Kitchen and Bath sealants will usually include a chemical mildewcide in the formulation for better performance in those moist environments. If choosing an exterior caulk that needs to be painted, then make sure your product indicates that the product is paintable, because you won't be able to paint standard silicone—no matter how many coats you throw at it.

THE RIGHT TECHNIQUE

Before applying any caulk or sealant, clean the surface of the work area thoroughly. This commonly overlooked step will prevent grit and debris from disrupting the application of the bead and keep unsightly dirt and dust from becoming embedded in your fresh caulk.

By Matt Weber

Caulking: It's a necessary evil. Applying the stuff is a messy job, often requires uncomfortable work on your knees, and it's just terribly unexciting. But when it comes to sealing out water and other elements, skipping the caulk will guarantee even more work in the future when you're forced to repair rot damage. And from an aesthetic standpoint, caulk gives any paint job or trim project—inside or outside the home—the sought-after finished look that separates professional-grade jobs from amateur attempts.

THE RIGHT STUFF

Product selection is the logical place to begin the job, and silicone-based sealants have long been the staple for exterior projects where a waterproof seal is necessary. However, standard silicone cannot be painted and is incredibly messy and sticky to use. Acrylic caulk is only appropriate for interior projects and is not waterproof, nor is it very flexible and may crack over time. However, acrylic caulk can easily be painted and is much easier to tool and clean up than silicone. Standard



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Cut the tip of the tube at a straight 90-degree angle. Start at the tip to keep the hole small. You can always recut to make the hole bigger, but you don't want it too big or you sacrifice control of the bead.

Many caulks/sealants have an interior seal that should be punctured inside the nozzle with a stiff wire or thin rod. Puncture this seal several times to make sure it is broken and the caulk will flow without restriction when the caulk-gun trigger is pulled.

Professional craftsmen rarely mask off a caulk bead with painter's tape, but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't. Masking the joint is an easy way to eliminate mess if you're not comfortable with your application prowess.

With the caulk tube loaded, pull the trigger several times to advance



Product selection is critical, from silicone to acrylic to water-based formulations. Check the packaging for specific indications, paying attention to words like "paintable" and flexible". Kitchen and bath caulks usually include a mildewcide.

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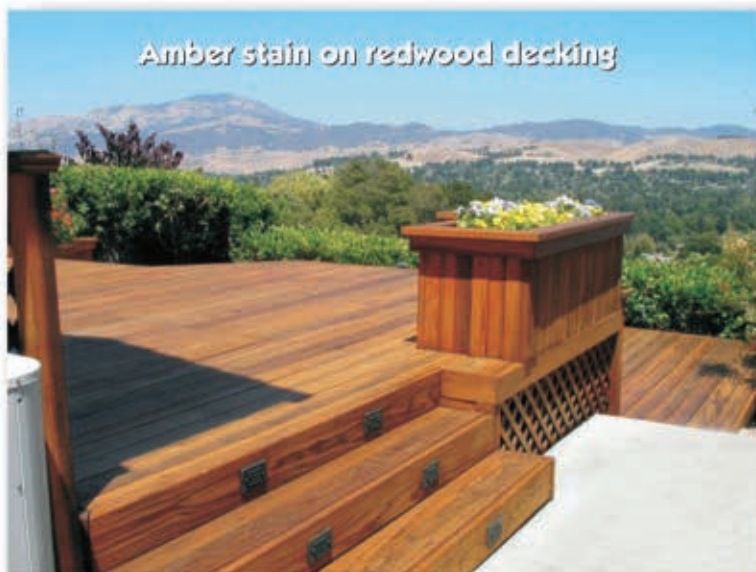
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the caulk to the tip of the nozzle. Release pressure from the plunger or driver arm any time you're not applying caulk to prevent excess from squirting out of the gun. Some caulk guns are indicated as

"drip-free," and prevent the caulk from flowing when the trigger is released.

Begin application at the horizontal joints. To ensure a full bead that adheres to both planes of



Clean the work area thoroughly to keep the caulk clean and ensure the best adhesion.

the caulk joint, rest the tip of the nozzle equally on both surfaces. Depress the trigger with one hand to force caulk into the joint as you stabilize the gun and move the bead with the other.

Keep the gun positioned at a 90-degree angle to the wall as you move the gun to lay the caulk bead. The right-angle position strikes a balance between pushing and pulling the bead for consistent application and easy visibility on both sides of the nozzle. Move the caulk gun at a steady rate, keeping the bead width as steady as possible and making sure to leave no gaps in the bead. If you cross any vertical joints, take the time to caulk a few inches up or down the joints, which will make it easier to connect the caulk beads later.



Rest the nozzle tip evenly on both sides of the joint.

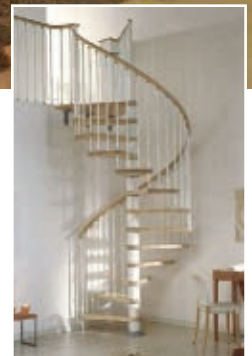
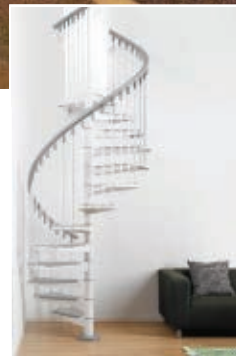


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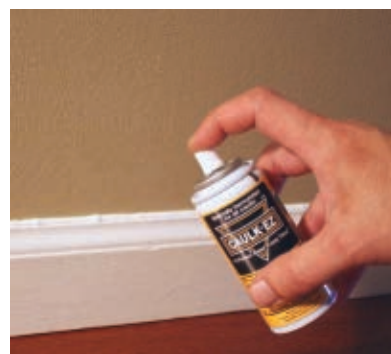
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Hold the gun at a right angle to the joint as you lay the caulk bead. The right-angle position strikes a balance between pushing and pulling for consistent application and easy visibility on both sides of the nozzle.

THE RIGHT SHAPE

One new option for tooling a caulk bead comes in the form of sprayable release agents. With these products, spray the completed caulk joint holding the can or bottle 4 to 6 inches away. The release agents prevent the caulk from sticking to the areas you spray and make shaping the joint much easier.



A sprayable release agent can make it easier to tool the caulk joint.

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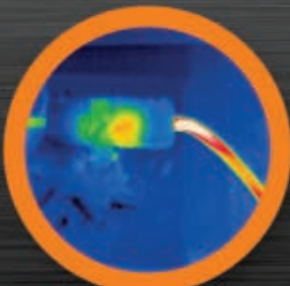
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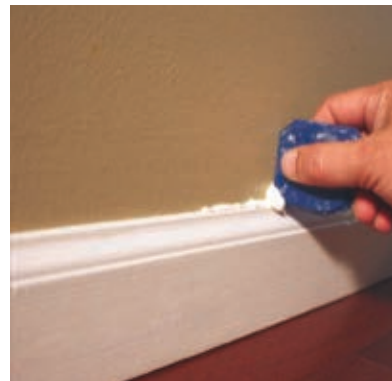


Emergency Power Shut-Off

Power shuts off immediately if cord is completely severed to prevent electrical injuries.

A traditional caulk shaping tool is a short wooden dowel (or a variety of dowels of different sizes) to create beads of varying sizes). Wet the dowel and draw the end of it over the caulk bead

to scrape away excess product and press the bead into a concave shape. Keep plenty of paper towels (both wet and dry) on hand for the inevitable cleanup. Another option is to use a wet



Tooling the bead sets the caulk into the joint and removes excess product.



A number of caulk-shaping tools are available at most hardware stores.



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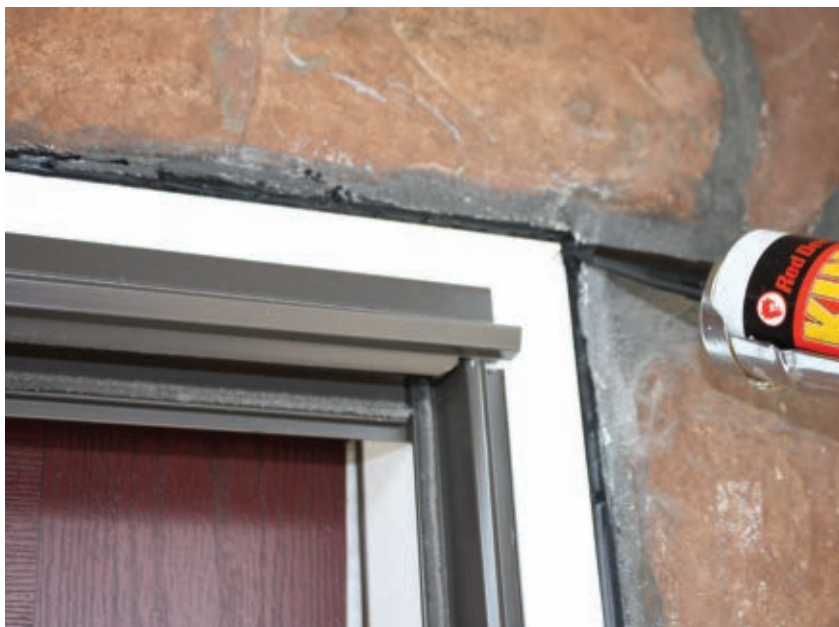


finger to shape the bead, but this obviously creates a mess, especially if you coat your fingers in the tar-like stickiness of silicone.

I prefer to use the new rubber shaping tools available at most homes stores. Rubber caulking tools, such as the Pro Caulk kit from Dap, have a large enough working surface to clean away most of the excess caulk while offering a variety of bead shapes, including multiple concave beads, 45-deg. bevel shapes and 90-deg. beads for filling gaps.

Finish the caulking job by filling all the vertical joints, tying them into your horizontal runs.

"Control" and "consistency" are the keys to a better caulk bead. Practice these techniques the next time you're saddled with a caulking project and you may just find that you hate the chore a little less. **EHT**



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Second, choose a gun with a flip-out seal punch. This super-simple feature should come on every gun, but it doesn't. It's a small metal rod that punctures the interior seal, so you don't have to monkey around with a wire coat-hanger or other makeshift implement.

Third, the EHT staff prefers a caulk gun with a geared drive mechanism with visible teeth on the driver arm. The less expensive variety relies on a friction lever that can wear out and slip over time, creating gaps in the caulk bead. The superior geared variety has a more positive interface for better grip to the driver. Professional tradesmen who do a lot of caulking might consider a battery-powered caulk gun that can apply a consistent bead at the single press of an electric button.



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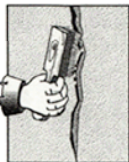
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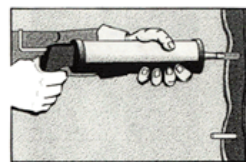
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Weather-ready Curb Appeal

Adding an Attractive Door Surround



By Paul Williams

terrible. The urethane pieces I installed resist shrinking, splintering, rotting and swelling, so they're going to provide long-term beauty and lasting results for this home exterior."

Roth used his creativity to design his own custom surrounds and crosshead for the door using flat urethane trim. "Because I was matching this trim up to log siding material I wanted a clean, simple look and fit," says Roth. "The high-density Fypon products are so easy to work with that it was simple to cut the pieces to the exact look and size I needed."

STEP-BY-STEP



Step #1 – Roth ordered three pieces of Fypon Flat Trim with a woodgrain finish (FLT111-12S) plus premium millwork adhesive for the door-trim project.

Step #2 – Prior to installation, Roth cut the trim pieces to size and painted the Fypon materials with one coat of exterior flat latex paint.

Step #3 – While the paint dried on the pieces, Roth invested an hour to install blocking around the perimeter of the window and door to match the thickness of the log

One of the fastest ways to add curb appeal to a home exterior is to surround the windows and doors with decorative trim. Contractor Steve Roth tackled this project while transforming a front porch and used decorative urethane millwork from Fypon to help the entryway and

windows complement the overall look of the exterior.

"We turned this home exterior into a lodge-style look, so the Fypon Stone and Timber Collection products were an ideal complement," says Roth. "The original trim had rotted and been replaced with vinyl J-channel, which looked

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siding material. The blocking, which was about 3/4-in. narrower than the Fypon trim width, gave him a flat surface to securely



attach the new trim. This also gave the appearance that the Fypon product was standing proudly "on top of" the log siding material.

Step #4 – Roth trimmed out the Fypon flat stock pieces to fit around and on top of the window and door. For the crosshead over the door he cut the ends of the flat trim moulding at a slight angle to give the crosshead a bit of detail. He also cut a scrap of trim into a keystone pattern and added it to the door crosshead.



Step #5 – After dry-fitting the pieces into place, Roth then used PL Premium construction adhesive in a squiggle pattern on the back of each piece. He secured the pieces in place to the blocking with non-corrosive deck fasteners.

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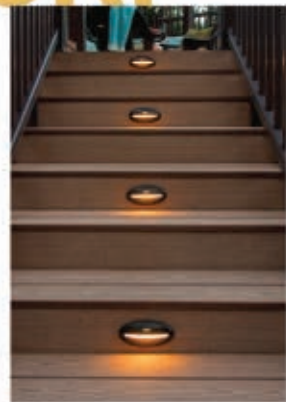
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Step #6 – Once installed, finishing touches included spackling in the countersunk nail areas and then latex paint touch-up. Start to finish, the window and door surround attachment took an additional hour, making this project a total of two hours.

TIPS FROM THE PRO

According to Roth, this easy one-person project moves fast and has instant results. Using very basic woodworking tools, including a cordless screw gun, power miter saw to cut the trim lengths and a caulk gun, Roth was able to finish this project quickly. He offers these tips for contractors tackling a similar project:

Tip #1 – Install the wood blocking even with the siding surface. This makes it very easy to install the Fypon trim around the windows.

Tip #2 – Pre-finish your materials before application. The Fypon products come factory-primed and it's much easier to paint the products before they're installed and then to go back and do light touch-up work afterwards.

Tip #3 – Use non-corrosive fasteners or deck screws so your fastener heads do not rust.

Fypon, which provided the product for the Roth porch transformation, offers thousands of decorative millwork elements in a variety of architectural styles to enhance the home's interior and exterior. Each piece is crafted from tough, weather-resistant, high-performance materials that resist decay, insect infestation and water damage for long-lasting beauty and low maintenance. For more information, visit www.fypon.com or stop by booth C6112 at the 2012 International Builder's Show. **EHT**

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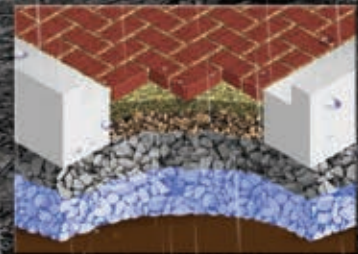
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INSTALLING AN ELECTRIC SNOW MELTING SYSTEM

Stay Clean & Safe in the Winter Months

In the North East, winter means shoveling and salting your walkway and stairs. The problem is that salt destroys stonework, and black ice can cause bone-breaking falls. One bad fall can result in a broken bone or cause you to throw out your back.

Heating a driveway or walkway is a great way to dispense with snow melt chemicals and ensure that your footpath is always clear and thus less likely to cause a slip-and-fall injury.

I recently had the opportunity to install a WarmlyYours Radiant Heat snow melting system in a front walkway. In this article I'll discuss what's involved in the installation of this product as well as provide you with feedback on my experience.

TWO TYPES OF SYSTEMS

There are two systems typically used outdoors when heating walkways and driveways: electrical heating cable and hydronic heating piping.

An electric snow melting system like WarmlyYours is top-of-the-line, designed to be energy efficient and fast at melting away the snow and preventing ice from forming. This system can be installed under concrete and asphalt and in mortar underneath brick pavers.

By Rob Robillard



INSTALLING AN ELECTRIC SNOW MELTING SYSTEM



Melting in action

A hydronic heating system uses copper tubing or cross-linked polyethylene (PEX) with a liquid treated with antifreeze to warm the driveway or walkway. The glycol solution is heated with a boiler, operated with either manual or automatic controls.

On this walkway project, electric heating was the only option and also the most cost-effective to install.

We chose to use the WarmlyYours Premium Snow Melting System, which was custom designed for my project and came complete with all the cable, controllers and snow sensors needed for a quality snow melting system.

INSTALLING THE SYSTEM UNDER BLUESTONE PAVERS

On this project the homeowners had a wooden stoop porch and a cobblestone front walkway that must have been a complete nightmare to shovel. They decided to tear out the wood stoop and cobbles to replace them with a fieldstone stoop with a bluestone top

and a bluestone walkway. The WarmlyYours system we chose to install was the Premium Control and Aerial Sensor option.

The WarmlyYours company designs durable, high-quality indoor and outdoor snow melt and heating products. Their heating cables are designed for concrete slab floors of new homes, outdoor driveways, walkways, stairs and patios. The product is well suited for large areas like basements, garages, additions and driveways.

A snow melting system heats the paving material, i.e. bluestone, which heats the walkway to a temperature above freezing that melts the snow, completely eliminating the need for shoveling and plowing.

Before starting my project I gave my customer service representative the exact project dimensions, and they provided me with a custom detailed installation drawing. The radiant heating experts at WarmlyYours offer a customized plan based on each customer's unique project, and I took full advantage of their expertise.

SNOW MELT SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS

The snow melt system was designed to be installed in asphalt, concrete or in mortar under pavers, and comes in mats or loose cable in specific lengths tailored to an individual project.

For my project I used 251 ft. of loose cable, which I looped and spaced approximately 3 in. apart. The system is CSA-certified for outdoor use in Canada and US and is offered in 120V or 240V configurations. It is rated for 3000 watts, 240 volts and 12.5 amps.

WarmlyYours sent me the following as part of the premium system:

- 251' of snow melt heat cable
- Relay panel
- Premium snow melt control panel
- Snow sensor
- Temperature sensor

WHAT IS RADIANT HEATING CABLE?

The Heating Cable is comprised of a dual multi-strand heating element with a primary insulation of Fluoropolymer. The insulated core is protected with a woven metal braid and an outer jacket of PVC, EPR or a Zero Halogen Polyolefin-based compound to make it sturdier and to provide corrosion protection.

These cables are terminated with 20-ft. long standard cold leads. The cold lead is obviously



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not heated and is used to enter into the building and attach to the control panel. The hot and cold junction is uniquely designed to make it 100-percent foolproof.

TYPES OF HEATING ELEMENTS

The snow melting system can be installed two ways: as a roll consisting of the heating cable taped on a polypropylene (PP) mesh mat or as a heating cable laid in a serpentine fashion, equally spaced and fastened to a metal grill or screen.

Both of these snow melting applications are available in a wide range of capacities and sizes to suit your unique requirements.

For normal concrete slab floors and mortar under pavers, WarmlyYours offers concrete mats



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ranging in length from 5 to 50 feet and in 2- and 3-ft. widths. They remind me of laying a towel at the beach—it is that quick and simple. These PP mats generate 50 watts per square foot.

The other option is free cable, which is ideal for oddly-shaped areas that include curved or diagonal walls, and is available in lengths ranging from 43 to 428 feet. The energy-efficient

twin-conductor heating cables generate 12 watts per lineal foot. Typical spacing of these cables is 3-1/2 to 5 in. on center.

I chose to use cable application on my installation because I needed to go from the stoop landing down to the step and then down again to the walkway. Making this transition with loose cable was the sensible decision.

ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS

To install this system the electrician needed to install a 20-amp/240 VAC electrical circuit-breaker and one 15-amp/120 VAC breaker. For better electrical efficiency I had my project wired for 240 volts.

My electrician also installed a master power shut-off at the control panel that has a red LED light indicator to show when the power

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Concrete pad for stoop



Concrete block prior to stone installation



Walkway tent for heating

is turned on, which is useful for completely shutting down the power or for servicing the snow melt unit.

DESIGNING THE STONE LANDING

I chose to build a concrete block landing and step with applied veneer stone to cover the sides of the landing and step risers.

I felt the radiant cable would be easier to install with a block foundation. Originally we had planned on building a true field-stone base and step but soon scrapped the idea. The concrete block would allow me to easily loop the heating cable and then travel down to the step and walkway.

The top of the landing and step would receive 1-1/2-in. thick bluestone treads with mitered corners and a large, center bluestone slab. All of the bluestone would be set in 1 to 1-1/2-in. of mortar.

PREPARING THE JOBSITE

The first order of business was to remove the old wood landing and step. I then installed Ice and Water Shield and copper flashing to the house wall where the new masonry landing and step were going.

I had my landscape contractor dig out the loam where the wood landing was. They dug down to a depth of 24 inches. I had them use the two existing 10-by-48-in.

deep concrete footings as part of my landing footing. These footings had supported the old wood porch landing.

We then drilled and installed No. 8 rebar into these footings as well as the brick wall of the house foundation. We connected this rebar with perpendicular rebar to make a grid. Once this was complete we formed the landing and step pad, added more rebar and then poured concrete into the entire formed area making one monolithic footing.

Because of the cold temperatures I installed scaffold pipe staging and used a tarp on top to make a tent. Using a torpedo heater I heated this area for the entire day and eight hours into the night to keep the concrete warm during the curing process.

LAYING OUT THE WALKWAY

Next, we focused on the walkway and removed all of the old cobblestones and installed a solid base for the new walkway. I used the old walkway width and length as a guide and stayed within those dimensions when ordering my materials.

Before setting the bluestone, I established a guide line along one edge of the walkway to ensure that the stone is laid in a straight line.

Decide what pattern you want to use in the design of your walkway. One popular pattern is herringbone. Bluestone is usually laid in a pattern and we used a running bond pattern (similar to a brick wall). The pattern you choose will determine the size and shape of the bluestone tiles you need to

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Walkway layout



Transition of heat cable

purchase. Many customers like to create their own patterns, but we liked the symmetry of the running bond.

Finding the center point of the bottom step, I located the center of the walkway. I then drove rebar spikes into the ground at this center point. A piece of string was then tied to the spike and pulled

taut to a spike at the other end of the walkway. I used a framing square to check that the string was perpendicular to the masonry step.

Once I was sure that my line was straight and square, I measured out from this center line at various points to locate the edges of the path. I marked both edge lines with

marker paint along the entire length of the walkway. Later we added layout strings on the edges.

We then excavated the walkway area inside the edge lines to a depth of 6 inches. We placed 4 in. of gravel and 1 in. of concrete sand on top of the gravel, leveling and compacting every inch with a gas-powered plate compactor. It is important to pack the base to prevent the stones from shifting.

I again utilized the scaffold and tarp to create a tent and used my heater to keep us, the sand and the gravel from freezing. It also kept the mortar on the landing warm.

INSTALLING THE CABLES

I drilled holes through the house sill and into the new masonry landing and installed two galvanized conduit pipes. One conduit pipe contained the



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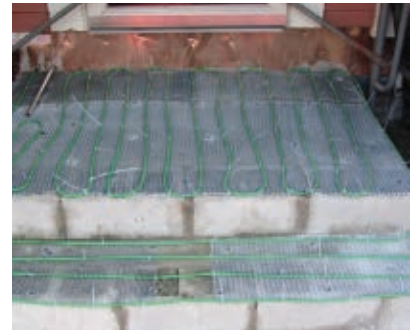
system's slab temperature sensor and the other contained the 20-ft. cold lead wire that connects to the system control panel.

In order to transition the heating cable from the landing to the step and then to the walkway, I used a grinder and diamond blade to cut off the corner of the concrete block. The stone veneer comes with corner blocks that cover all of the corners. By removing the block's corner I was able to create a channel for the heating cable to pass through freely.

I used galvanized mesh similar to what masons use on stucco homes to secure my cables. On the masonry landing and step I used Tapcon screws to secure the mesh, and on the walkway I bent galvanized wire in the shape of a "U" to pin the mesh down into the gravel base.



Install tapcons into mesh



Stoop with heat coils

The electric radiant heating cable was then installed in a serpentine pattern onto the stucco wire mesh with plastic tie wraps. I was careful not to overlap the cables at any point to avoid possibly overheating the cables.

The manufacturer recommends a minimum cable spacing of 3 in. and the maximum spacing at 12

inches. I also made sure I installed the cable at a depth that would not be deeper than 2-1/2 in. from the top of the finished bluestone.

Note: Do not kink the cable sharply when bending it for installation.

It is extremely important that you do not use any heavy equipment, machinery or vehicles over

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INSTALLING AN ELECTRIC SNOW MELTING SYSTEM

the exposed heating cable during the paver installation process.

Care also must be taken by the bluestone installer to ensure that the mortar covers the heating cables/mats so they do not make direct contact with the bluestone. The manufacturer recommends that at least 1-1/2-in. thick mortar is poured over the cables/mats but no more than 2 inches.

During this process we had the electrician use a 500 VDC megohm-meter and a multi-meter to continuously check on the heating cables over which we were working, to ensure they were not damaged. The electrician then needs to complete final testing of all the cables/mats to verify that each element has survived the pour of mortar and is ready for action once the mortar is cured.



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INSTALLATION OF THE BLUESTONE PAVERS

On the landing and step, a 1-in. bed of mortar was installed over the heating cables.

In the walkway a layer of sand was added over the heating cables. I started setting the stones at the base of the steps, using a rubber mallet to tap

each piece securely in the sand.

The finished bluestone we were installing was 2 in. thick. Each stone was checked for level, and we maintained a consistent gap between them for an attractive look.

Mortar mixture was added along both edges of this walkway below the grass line to help prevent erosion issues and to help hold, or “book-end,” the blue stones in place.

For faster installation we laid all of the full pieces first and then went back and cut the edge

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Laying out walkway cables



Walkway cables installed



Miter cuts on the stoop



Stoop landing installation



Installing the bluestone

pieces. The bluestone joints were filled with colored polymeric sand.

INSTALLING THE SNOW SENSOR

The premium system has an aerial mounted snow sensor that attaches to the exterior of the house, and a low-voltage wire runs back to the Warmly Yours control panel. The Snow Sensor detects falling or blowing snow at temperatures below 38°F (3.3°C). When used with the in-slab sensor, the system automatically controls the snow/ice melting heaters, thus ensuring minimum operating costs.

The system also has an adjustable hold-on timer that keeps the heater in operation for up to 10 hours after the snowfall stops to ensure complete melting and drying of the walkway. WarmlyYours recommends setting this hold-on to 3-5 hours.

An optional Remote Control Override, can be located where

the system's operation can be conveniently observed. It duplicates many of the controls and indicators on the SPC-120 front panel. It is used to clear tracked and drifting snow that may not land on a sensor.

As part of this installation I installed a slab-mounted, high-limit sensor that prevents excessive temperatures so the system does not overheat or heat up an already warm slab.

OPERATING TIPS

Energy consumption will vary depending on ambient temperature and building insulation. For lower energy consumption, the homeowner chose to use a 7-day Programmable Thermostat control.

Energy consumption can be minimized by turning the system off when heating is not required, but extra time will be required for the slab to warm up once the system is turned on again.

Tip: Avoid placing objects like thick mats on the heated slab, especially in the area where the floor temperature sensor is located. These restrict the transfer of heat away from the cables and result in the floor area beneath them being warmer than other areas. Avoid mats with rubber or vinyl backing because these may decompose with heat and could stain the flooring.

HOW'D IT WORK?

I found the installation instructions really easy to follow. I did have a few questions and needed to call my project manager, Matthew Caruso. All of my questions were answered thoroughly and promptly, which is a huge plus when you're working on a project with deadlines and other contractors are involved. A project manager is involved in every WarmlyYours design. The manager approves your design

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INSTALLING AN ELECTRIC SNOW MELTING SYSTEM

and follows your project to the end. I was impressed with the level of customer attention and service provided.

The cables were very easy to install, and the electrical portion of the project was handled by an electrician. I made and installed a mounting board for the Warmly Yours Controller for a clean look to the installation.

THE FIRST SNOW STORM —A REAL TEST

The WarmlyYours snow melting system is wired to the snow and ice sensor that turns the system on and off automatically, saving the need to operate the system manually.

The very first snow storm of the season dropped 18 inches of heavy wet snow in a 12-hour period. A blizzard is categorized as a storm

that delivers a minimum of 35-mph wind with snow visibility of 1/4 mile or less. That means drifting snow!

The WarmlyYours Snow Melting System turned on automatically and ran throughout the storm. The storm dropped 1 to 3 in. per hour. At one point the walkway had 1 in. of snow on it about two hours into the storm, but I attributed this to the bluestone needing time to warm up. Once it reached snow melting temperature the result was a completely clear and dry surface. After the 12-hour blizzard had passed, the system continued to heat the slab for 3 more hours.

When I installed the walkway cable I was particularly diligent about spacing the cables I installed. I made sure all of my loops were 3 inches apart. Towards the end

of the walkway installation I was getting nervous that I might run out of cable so I began to space my loops at 5 to 6 in. apart and finished the last 18 in. of the walkway this way. My observations during the storm were that the section of walkway with the 3-in. spaced wires melted first and stayed clear throughout the entire storm. The 4- to 6-in. spaced wire section took a little longer to melt the snow and was covered with 1 in. of snow during the heaviest part of the blizzard.

I also observed that the edges of the bluestone landing and step iced up slightly. If you remember, I installed and stopped the heating cables at the concrete block (landing foundation) edge. The landing then had stone veneer applied and an overhanging



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INSTALLING AN ELECTRIC SNOW MELTING SYSTEM

bluestone top. This means that there is approximately 4 to 5 in. of landing edge and step edge that do not have snow melt cable directly below it and subsequently need time to warm up. They eventually did warm up and melt the ice, but not until after the storm. A quick scrape with a shovel cleared this during the storm, and the rest melted soon after.

Four hours after the storm the walkway was clear and dry with no residual ice or snow. The system worked extremely well in the harshest environment. I was very impressed!

SNOW BE GONE

If you are considering installing a snow melting system, the best time for installation would be during a new home project or major land-

scaping changes to the property. If old, cracked walkways need replacing, that would also be an excellent time for this type of installation.

The system for this project costs approximately \$2,400 MSRP, and the company was easy to deal with. From start to finish, installing the Warmly Yours snow melting system cables took six hours, plus time for making the electrical connections.

The installation is straightforward and the results are worth the investment: No more shoveling this walkway. The bluestone paving material absorbs heat from the system, melting the ice and snow while the homeowner relaxes inside. There's no need for expensive deicing chemicals that can reduce the life of your driveway. And your family, guests or customers can visit you safely. **EHT**



Finished walkway

Editor's Note: Robert Robillard is a remodeling contractor based in Concord, MA. He is also the editor of a www.AConcordCarpenter.com.

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BY GALAXIE

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2013

INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW

PREVIEW

It's almost time for the big one. The International Builders' Show is the largest annual light construction show in the world, exhibiting the latest technology in foundations and roofing and everything in between. Held January 22-24 in Las Vegas, Nevada, IBS 2013 is the place to see the most advanced building products and services currently available. Explore the newest innovations with hands-on demonstrations and working models in more than 300 building industry categories. For construction professionals from coast to coast, IBS is the place to discover the most cutting-edge trends in the market, and the *EHT* staff has assembled a preview of hot items to check out while you're cruising the convention floor.

THERMA-TRU FIBERGLASS DOORS

Therma-Tru will be exhibiting its broad line of energy-efficient fiberglass entry doors. The polyurethane foam core offers up to four times the energy efficiency of a wood door and contains no CFCs. A solid hardwood square edge that reproduces the look of real wood surrounds the foam core, and a wood lock stile runs the entire length of the door to add structural integrity and heft. Covering the insulation materials is a door skin that can replicate real wood (which can be stained and finished easily) or come in smooth, paintable surfaces. The fiberglass skin resists denting, cracking, splitting and splintering. It also resists rust, shrinking or swelling with temperature changes, or warping. To gain a tight fit with the door, a composite adjustable sill allows for an air-tight seal with the door bottom to prevent moisture damage. Add to the list of features the adjustable, heavy-duty ball-bearing hinges and the foam-filled compression weather stripping. Choose from a variety of styles and glass packages. Visit ww.thermatru.com or stop by booth C6107.







TIMBERTECH EARTHWOOD EVOLUTIONS

TimberTech adds to the color options of its Earthwood Evolutions product line to include the Terrain Collection. Joining the Tropical and Natural Collections, this new color palette features two long-lasting colors—Brown Oak and Silver Maple—that emulate the earthy tones found in nature. Earthwood Evolutions is a fully-capped plank that features TimberTech's proprietary HydroLock technology for rugged durability and superior moisture resistance. Backed by a 25-year fade and stain warranty, the decking features a Flat Grain surface pattern that does not trap dirt and has variegated color designed to achieve a true hardwood appearance. Planks come in either a grooved profile, which works with TimberTech's CONCEALoc hidden fastening system, or a solid profile that can be face-screwed. Earthwood Evolutions Terrain Collection is available in 12-, 16- and 20-ft. lengths, along with matching fascia. Visit www.timertech.com or stop by booth C7312.

DURADEK ULTRA TILEDEK

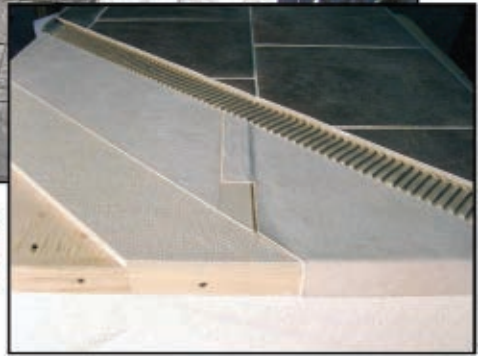
Duradek is the original sheet vinyl membrane for waterproofing decks and balconies, developed to solve leak problems over 35 years ago. The company's Ultra Tiledek product meets North American building and industry standards as a roofing and waterproofing membrane that can

accept the direct application of outdoor tile. The ability to have a rooftop deck with a beautiful tile surface is no longer a waterproofing issue waiting to happen.

Duradek has been working with tile industry associations to ensure that Ultra Tiledek's superior waterproofing performance meets the needs of the tile installers and stonemasons all over North America and provides the highest level assurance that when tiles are laid over a Tiledek membrane, they will never have to be removed for waterproofing repairs. Visit www.duradek.com or stop by booth N2518.

ATLANTIC PREMIUM SHUTTERS

Adding shutters is among the most effective and simple ways homeowners can elevate curb appeal, create an inviting façade and provide colorful accents. Available in 40 colors and numerous styles, Atlantic Premium Shutters from the Tapco Group add an elegant touch to exteriors that feature brick, stucco, stone veneer, premium vinyl or fiber cement. Atlantic shutters are historically accurate and architecturally correct, with matte-black finished stainless-steel hardware that sets off the shutters from the home. The shutter design also allows a hint of the home's exterior cladding to be visible between the shutter and window to provide a noticeable fine touch.





Unlike wooden shutters, these composite shutters require no maintenance or worrying about warping, rotting or painting. Crafted from marine-grade fiberglass, structural-grade PVC and composite wood, Atlantic Shutters offer a limited lifetime structural warranty and a 15-year finish warranty. Plus, several units are "hurricane-rated" for top-notch weather resistance. Visit www.atlanticpremiumshutters.com or stop by booth C6119.

DAVINCI ROOFSCAPES

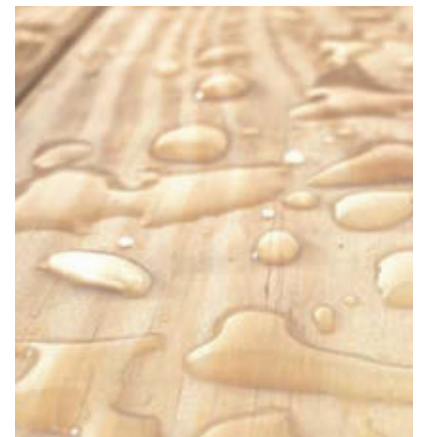
Eight of DaVinci Roofscapes EcoBlend polymer roofing tiles have qualified as compliant, including the Slate, Shake, Fancy Shake and Bellaforté product lines. The EcoBlend tiles reflect sunlight and heat away from the home. The EcoBlend tiles that are now Energy Star-qualified include Weathered Gray (in Medium, Medium Light, Medium Dark, Light and Dark) and Gray (in Dark, Light and Medium) colors. EcoBlend roofing tiles can help property owners save on energy costs and improve the comfort of

the structure, reflecting more of the sun's rays to reduce the amount of air conditioning needed in buildings. A Cool Roof is measured by two properties, solar reflectance and thermal emittance. Both properties are measured from 0 to 1. The higher the value is, the cooler the roof is. During independent testing, DaVinci EcoBlends measured in a range of 0.31 to 0.36 for solar reflectance and in the range of 0.88 to 0.89 for thermal emittance. Visit www.davinciroofscapes.com or stop by booth N1624.



ECOLIFE STABILIZED WOOD

Ecolife stabilized weather-resistant wood from Viance is ideal for decks and other above-ground outdoor projects. Comprised of a non-metallic, carbon-based preservative plus wood-stabilizing polymer system that offers the natural beauty of real wood combined with advanced weather protection and fastener performance, the Ecolife treatment also provides protection against decay and termites. Results from accelerated weathering tests that simulate two years of Florida weather show the stabilizer in Ecolife reduces cracking and splitting by approximately 90 percent compared to traditional ACQ or C-A treated wood. Visit www.treatedwood.com or stop by booth N2331.



WARMBOARD-R

Warmboard-R is a 13/16-in. thick hydronic radiant heating panel made of aspen and pine OSB (oriented strand board) and is sold in square-edged 2-by-4 ft. panels. It provides the same superior radiant heat performance as our original Warmboard panel. This slimmer profile and smaller panel size is ideal for remodels and renovations where the full strength of the original 1-1/8-in. Warmboard is not required. Like

the original, Warmboard-R has the same highly conductive 1060 alloy aluminum securely bonded to the wood panel. This 0.025-in. plate coats the entire surface as well as the tubing channels, creating one unified surface for the heat to quickly travel across. These radiant panels feature convenient installation, fast response and lower energy usage. Warmboard-R is also an ideal ceiling or wall panel—perfect when existing floor coverings must be preserved. Plus, Warmboard Inc.'s products use the lowest water temperatures in the industry, lowering your monthly energy bill while providing comfortable heating. Visit www.warmboard.com or stop by booth N2339.



BILCO POWDER-COATED BASEMENT DOORS

The Bilco Company's Classic Series steel basement doors will now be offered with a factory-applied powder coat finish. Initially available on the company's most popular Size B and C steel-sided

doors, this option offers a superior finish to conventional paint while eliminating the time and expense required by the homeowner to finish a door upon installation. Powder-coated basement doors are offered in four standard colors

(white, sandstone, light gray and brick) to complement the exterior of any home. Powder coating makes metal products durable, attractive, extremely scratch-resistant and is ideal for exterior applications. The finishing process



starts with a free-flowing powder that is applied to the metal door components with an electrostatic gun. The powder adheres to the positively grounded components and is melted and fused together into a solid coating in a curing oven. The result is a high-quality finish that is remarkably strong. Visit www.bilco.com or stop by booth N1710.

SCHLUTER SYSTEMS KERDI-BOARD

Many substrates are unsuitable for tile installation, especially in areas with high moisture. These situations can require a great deal of preparation and waterproofing.

In response, Kerdi-Board from Schluter Systems is rapidly gaining ground in the building industry as an easy way to create flat, level, plumb and square substrates for tile installation over existing structures as diverse as masonry, wood and metal studs. In addition to being lightweight and easy to cut with a utility knife, Kerdi-Board is inherently waterproof and vapor-retardant and has workability similar to rigid foam-board insulation. When used in conjunction with the Schluter-Shower System, it provides an integrated tile backing and moisture management system for showers and bathtub surrounds. Suitable panel thick-

nesses of Kerdi-Board can be used to quickly create stable and self-supporting partition walls and tub platforms that are immediately ready for tiling. There is even a grooved version of the Kerdi-Board panel designed for creating rounded and curved walls and corners. Visit www.schluter.com or stop by booth N1311.

ULTRA-TEC RAILING KITS

Ultra-tec Cable Railing components from The Cable Connection are architecturally designed for a sleek, elegant look—some of which even hide inside your end posts. Ultra-tec railing kits now incorporate two new Push-Lock models into its line. The standard kits, from 5 to 25 feet long, incorporate one tensioning device (pre-swaged at the factory) and a swageless fitting on each cable, so the cable can be trimmed to exact length on-site. Additionally, The Cable Connection has developed new 30-, 40-, and 50-ft. kits to complement the shorter ones. The longer kits often need to turn corners, and in order to maintain the proper tension, the long cable kits have tensioning devices at both ends. The result is a long kit with dual tensioning, which ensures you have a good taut cable when you're done—something you'll appreciate when the building inspector visits. Visit www.thecableconnection.com or visit booth N1249. **EHT**



CROSSING O



Building a bridge for a volunteer project demonstrates DIY takeaways for every job.



By Mark & Theresa Clement

When Theresa and I were asked if we could help out at Rebuilding Together's Annual National Project called Building a Better Neighborhood, our assignment was to build a small bridge. You know the kind: one that usually spans a small creek or gully in a back yard.

Small or large, we've always wanted to build a bridge, but having seen some pretty awesome—and pretty grim—backyard crossings, we wanted this one to rock.

And even though this bridge is a one-off project, there are some cool things you can use to both build a bridge of your own and solve other home improvement headaches from footings to flooring projects to leaving your city better than you found it, which we're calling "DIY takeaways."



To lay out the project you need dependable straight lines to guide your measurements. When I need to create two control points in space, I try and use a full-size template like this giant square we made from super-straight Western Red Cedar.

DESIGN

We built the bridge for a neighborhood community center, kind of an anchor point to an urban neighborhood that was rebuilding itself. Our mighty span of 14 feet is over a shallow “bio-swale” that collects and naturally filters runoff from the parking lot and the playground area above—a micro-wetland in the middle of America’s 5th largest city, Philadelphia. We needed a bridge that could accommodate everything from wheelbarrows to wheelchairs and look good doing it.

Bridge Deck. One key was to make the crossing be part of the landscape rather than something “applied” over the top of it. The building-side of the bridge span (where the walking path and community center were located) was the highest point, and we used that as our layout control point. Because it’s about 12 inches higher than the parking lot, it

became important to terminate the building-side into grade (i.e. the level of the existing ground). This makes a smooth transition and lowers the bridge on the parking lot-side for a more accommodating ramp down to the macadam.

Rail. We made the guardrail look cool, but not too busy—and not exactly like a backyard deck or store-bought bridge. At the same time, we wanted it to do the same job of a backyard deck safety-wise.

HOW-TO

The bio-swale proved both easy and challenging to build in. It was easy because the span wasn’t that long, and we could use solid-sawn, pressure-treated dimensional lumber (donated by Culpepper Wood Preservers.)

It was, however, a layout challenge because the tops of the footings were about 16 inches below grade. In other words, our holes were in holes—weird.

On the parking lot side, we could set the joists on the sidewalk curb.

DIY Take-Away—Footing Layout. Whenever I’m building something where there’s nothing dependable to measure to or from, I know there will be problems later if I’m not extremely careful. The best way to short-circuit this problem is with full-size templates. In this case, we built a giant square from super-straight Western Red Cedar 2x4 so that we could locate and mark our footing posts the same distance away from the curb as one another and be confident they were the correct distance apart (4 feet).

Grade Beam Attachment. I’m not a big fan of J-Bolts and wet concrete no matter how carefully I lay out. Using post-bases and drop-in anchors like the galvanized Red Head sleeve anchors works better. To set them we measured again, marked the center of the hole, then drilled



Footings must be 36" deep where we work. But with the hill and depth of the bridge structure, the tops of the footings would have been almost 16" below the walking path grade, so we moved them inward from the end of the bridge to give us a little more working room.



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1/2-in. diameter holes in the cured concrete with a Bosch Bulldog rotary hammer. We inserted the anchors and socked them up tight, dead-money on layout.

Next, we set our 4x4 grade beam and fastened through the bracket flange with hanger nails. This method is fast, solid and rated for ground contact.



Forget J-bolts and wet concrete. We let the posts cure, then Bosch Bulldogged some 1/2" holes for galvanized Red Head sleeve anchors.



We installed a 4x4 grade beam and LedgerLOKed our bridge to it. This helped us set the structure to minimize digging.

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BRIDGE DECK FRAMING

The best way to frame a structure like this isn't joist-by-joist over the span, but all at once on a flat surface. Because the parking lot was right there, we spared ourselves the headache of setting 12 ft. 2x12's individually and built the box (flushing the framing to the top side if there was variation in board thickness), nailing with galvanized ring-shank nails.

Were we to build a bridge in a back yard, we would consider employing this technique if it were close enough to a drive-way or other flat surface—and we had enough muscle to move it later.

Joists are 2x12—oversized for this span but worth their weight by

ensuring a solid structure over time. They are laid out left to right with 16-in. on-center spacing.

Next step is to pull diagonals on the box to square it up. Once square, nail on 2x diagonal bracing. Then, recruit enough strong-backs/weak-minds to lift and set the unit as a whole. Double-check that you're on layout and nail to the grade beam.



Because we had a parking lot next to us, we framed there instead of rolling joists. The key is to flush everything to the top face if there is variation in joist thickness.



Lift—got muscle?



Blocking serves two framing purposes on this project, just like on a deck. It stiffens a floor system and it helps straighten bowed joists.

DECKING

Before laying decking, ensure the outside joists are straight. You might have to install blocking between the joists to true-up a

curved board. Also, if you're using 2x8 or 2x10 framing, intermediate blocking stiffens up joists.

We alternated two 2x6's and two 2x10's for our decking pattern,

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again to make the project special and buildable all at the same time. Most lumber manufacturers don't recommend boards wider than 2x6 for a deck because they say wider boards are more prone to movement. However, I've used 2x10 on a 3-ft. wide play-set bridge we built, and it has performed just like 2x6 decking I installed elsewhere on the structure.

The installation trick is to get 10-ft. deck boards and cut them in half before installation. Next, set each board a few inches wild over each side then snap lines and trim all at once just like a deck.

GUARD RAIL

The 4x4 guard posts are installed equidistant from each other every four feet. What this means for layout is that we marked the centerline

of the bridge span, then pulled 24 inches on either side of that, which signifies the centers of next two posts. Next, we pulled 48 in. from those lines, which is the center of the outside two posts.



Pre-cut 10' deck boards in half on the miter saw, then run the ends wild before cutting all at once in place.



We alternated two 2x10 and two 2x6 for this deck system. It also delivers a cool look.



Use 3 nails per joist on 2x10. For any gun-nail decking we recommend ring-shank 16s.

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Between the posts at the bottom, we LedgerLOKed 4x4's for a beefy trim board.

We installed the guardposts with FastenMaster's ThruLOKs which are the best thing to happen to guard rail installation since impact drivers—which is what you should use to install them.

However, a bridge is a horizontal structure by nature, and Theresa wanted the look to reflect that, so instead of running vertical 2x2 she specified horizontal rails. We made them by ripping down 5/4x6 deck boards 2 inches wide (we routed roundovers on the saw-cut edges) and installed them with 2-1/2-in. deck screws at 5 in. on center per the DCA-6 Prescriptive Deck Code. The reason for this spacing is so that a 4-in. sphere (for parents, read: infant's head) can't pass through the opening.

DIY Takeaway—Got a deck to build? Use the DCA-6 for all your details and code requirements to make sure your structure is compliant for the building inspector.

Theresa spec'ed 2x4 diagonals between the posts to join the vertical and horizontal lines—homage, if



4x4 trim, horizontal rails, 2x4 diagonals and a 5/4 wrap add character and “space” without over-detailing it.



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Forget nails or deck screws, we impact-drove 6" LedgerLOKs into our 4x4. Bam!

you will, to larger trestle bridges and structures. Finally, we wrapped the end posts and 4x4 guardrail with a 5/4x6 trim board.

TERMINATIONS

To minimize digging and to clear the rest of our span, we built a bridge extension on the building-side of the span to take us the remaining 24 inches.

At grade, we dug a trench 8-in. wide and 10-in. deep, filled it with about 6 in. of pea gravel then tamped another 4x4 grade beam into it level. We packed around that with pea gravel and dirt.

On the bridge side we locked it to the band joist with LedgerLOKs then decked it.

The parking lot side of the bridge posed a challenge. The goal was to frame a ramp that

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We wrapped the 4x4 rail and end-posts with 5/4 and fastened with screws.

VOLUNTEERING

Theresa and I have volunteered on a number of different home and community improvement projects. Some are small like planting trees in our neighborhood; some off the charts like *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* project in Joplin, Missouri. On these projects we've met champions of endurance who don't know how to quit, no matter how bad things are. Those are winners worth a weekend in my book—nevermind the opportunity to meet and hang out with other cool *Extreme How-To*-minded people who we'd never otherwise meet. This is one of the reasons why Theresa and I dig working with Rebuilding Together.

The organization's approach is founded in neighborhoods and homeowners that are invested—people who own the homes and are committed to turning the page not just for themselves but for their community. More and more, the organization is taking on "cluster builds"—entire neighborhoods rather than a single home. These projects are making a critical change ... crossing over.

The economy is tough for everyone and it is toughest on those with the least to lose. That's math, not politics in my view. I believe that the mark of a civilized society is that it judiciously helps those willing to help themselves, and that's what Rebuilding Together aims to do—one house, one neighborhood at a time, one life at a time. Learn more at www.rebuildingtogether.com.

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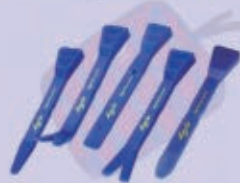
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CROSSING OVER



We fastened a 4x4 top cap to our 4x4 posts for a beefy, linear look.

We knew we had a ton of 4x4 and 2x10 to cut and were running a long cord. To help make the cuts faster—and hopefully prevent throwing breakers, which can be a real problem on sites like this—we cowboied up to a new Freud Diablo blade on the miter saw. Nothing really tells how dull or gummed up your old blades are as a new, sharp one.





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was in-plane with the bridge decking and easy to roll onto in a wheelchair or with a wheelbarrow. However, because the parking lot surface pitched in two directions, the geometry was a little befuddling. It's so site-specific that it's hard to draw a general lesson from it, but in order to keep the ramp level we had to scribe each joist level with the first joist we set. To keep it level—and in plane—the ramp is slightly pie-shaped.

At the top of the ramp, we ripped a 12-deg. angle off the last ramp board where it meets the horizontal decking to mate up the pieces without a trip step.

Where the boards met the parking lot, we made a taper. I do this on custom thresholds in flooring projects all the time, what you do is: Tilt the table saw blade to 12

DIY TAKEAWAY: PULLING DIAGONALS

If you're an *EHT'er* you likely know that "pulling diagonals" is the way to check if a square-shaped or rectangular-shaped structure is "square," i.e. has 90-deg. corners.

Put another way, if you pull two tapes from opposite corners of the structure (like an X across the structure) and get the same measurement on both tapes, the structure is square. If you don't, you have to rack it one way or the other until it is square.

However, there is nuance to this measurement that if you don't know can come back and bite you later. Here are some tips:

PULL YOUR TAPE TIGHT. A deck frame, for example, is a long enough distance that if your tape sags a little, it can throw you off by inches.

DON'T TWIST THE TAPE. Same as a sag—deforming the tape can throw off your measurement.

HOOK AND READ FROM THE SAME EDGE OF THE TAPE BLADE. This might be the trickiest one. I always read my tape from the side of the blade the numbers are on, what I call the top. If you're pulling diagonals with a helper and you're both reading the tape from a different edge, then your measurement is off.

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CROSSING OVER



We built a "pad" with pea gravel and a second 4x4 grade beam to support the bridge extension.



We built a smaller bridge box to extend the bridge to its termination point at grade.

degrees then run your piece through on-edge. This is a great way to make custom thresholds in flooring projects as well. (For interiors, it is critical that you sand out the saw marks before staining.)

And here's the bridge theme again. An unintended consequence of working on volunteer projects, such as this bridge build, is that you're sometimes solving problems on the fly. And, sometimes you need to bring your entire bag of tricks with you to get the job done. But what you might find working with a stranger on a volunteer project is that they may have their own bag of tricks to share with you... helping you to "cross over." **EHT**

Editor's Note: Mark and Theresa Clement host MyFixitUpLife.com

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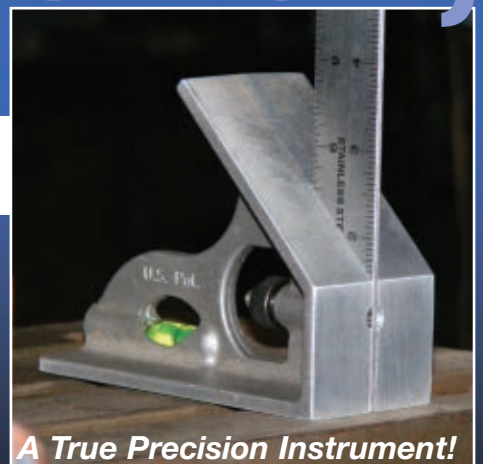
Because the parking lot pitches in two directions, the ramp geometry was tricky. The take-away here is not how to make a ramp, but how to recognize a way to make DIY solutions when things get confusing. The key sometimes is to select the most important, overarching criteria and then make everything work within it. In order to make this bridge level and stay in-plane we had to make it longer on one side than the other.

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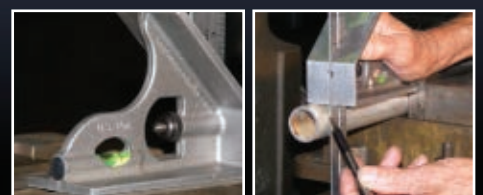
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Know Your Central Heating Systems



By Matt Weber

Home buyers and home builders should know the ins and outs of their heating system. Here's a cheat-sheet that covers differences among the standard central heating options, from fuel types to system setups.

FURNACE

A furnace heats a home by pulling cool indoor air into the unit, heating it and then distributing the warmed air throughout the home via ductwork. Today, most furnaces today use natural gas, oil or electricity, and each system works a little differently.

With natural gas heating, the gas is mixed with air inside a burner and ignited inside a combustion chamber. In a forced-air system, a blower pulls cool air from the

rooms through the air ducts and into the furnace. The air is heated by a heat exchanger connected to the combustion chamber, and the warm air then flows back into the house through ductwork. Exhaust gases from the burners are vented outside through the roof, or in some cases, a side-wall vent.

"Gas furnaces are the most common winter heating units in North America," says Jason Ingram of Ingram's Water and Air Equipment, a wholesale equipment supplier based in Paducah, Kentucky. "Dollar for dollar, they're still the most effective option for many homeowners."

An oil-fired furnace operates in a manner similar to gas, but the oil is atomized and then burned. Air absorbs heat in the exchanger,

and a blower returns the warm air back through the house via the ductwork. Emissions are then vented outside.

Some homes are equipped with gravity furnaces that do not rely on forced air or blowers. Gravity furnaces are typically installed in basements and warm the home as heat naturally rises through the ducts.

An electric forced-air furnace uses a blower to move air over electrically-heated coils. The warm air is then distributed through the through ductwork. These units can be used with heat pumps or central air conditioners, and they require no venting.

BOILER

Boilers heat water that transports heat to radiators, baseboard heaters, hydronic radiant floor systems and more. The hot water of a boiler can heat an entire home or just certain zones, as well as provide consumable hot water to a kitchen, bathroom, swimming pool or hot tub. A boiler can even provide the hot water for a radiant system installed beneath a driveway or sidewalks to melt ice and snow (see page 34).

In a boiler, water is typically heated to a pre-set temperature between 160- to 180-degrees F. The hot water is then circulated by pumps through pipes in the home. This heated water then warms radiators and other fixtures installed throughout the home. As the cool air in the room flows through the hot radiators, the air is warmed. As the heat from the water inside the radiator is released into the air, the water inside the radiator is cooled and returns back to the boiler to be reheated.



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The primary energy source for modern residential boilers is oil or natural gas. Heat is created during the combustion process when air mixes with the fuel and is burned. Residential gas boilers typically

use a pilot to ignite the flame, while oil burners are ignited using direct spark of the oil flame. In all cases, the burned fuel is exhausted to the outdoors.

The efficiency of both a boiler

and furnace can be determined by its AFUE rating (Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency). The Federal Trade Commission requires new furnaces or boiler manufacturers to display the system's AFUE so consumers can compare heating efficiencies of various models.

"Remember, when it comes to AFUE, higher is always better," notes Ingram.

The Department of Energy's "Energy Star" qualified boilers have annual AFUE ratings of 85 percent or greater. The minimum efficiency level for furnaces currently manufactured in the U.S. is 80-percent AFUE. A rating of 80 percent means that for every dollar you spend heating your home, 80 cents are actually applied to the generation of warmth. The other 20 escapes up the chimney or elsewhere. For enhanced energy efficiency, you should consider a 95-percent AFUE unit.

HEAT PUMP

Air-transfer heat pumps can provide both heating and cooling to maintain the indoor comfort of your home. In the summer, a heat pump functions as a central air conditioner. But in the winter, the heat pump reverses its action to create warm, comfortable air for your home.

A heat pump operates by transferring heat from air inside the home to the outside air. It has three main components: a compressor, a condenser and an evaporator coil. These parts are responsible for converting a chemical refrigerant from a gas to a liquid and back again. During the summer the indoor unit, which contains the evaporator coil, removes indoor warmth and humidity from the air. The outdoor unit, which contains the condenser and compressor, rejects the heat that was captured indoors.

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"An energy-efficient heat pump is a great home HVAC system," says Ingram. "Depending on where you live, it could be the only cooling and heating system you need." Some manufacturers offer a

"package" heat pump. These all-in-one systems supply both cooling and heating equipment in a single "package" that sits on the ground or rooftop outside of your home, economizing space.

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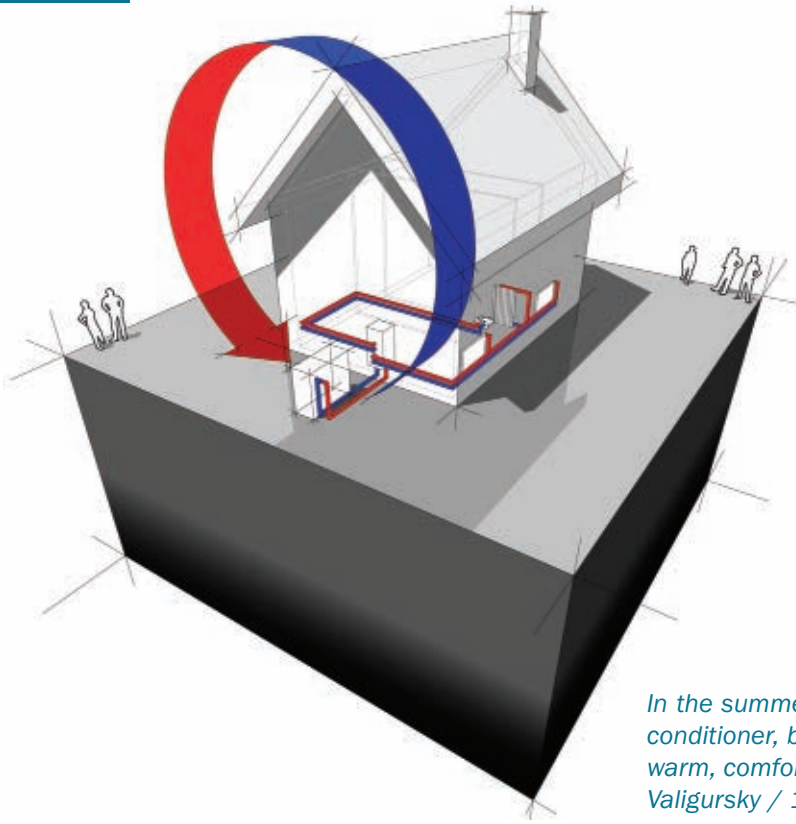
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In the summer, a heat pump functions as a central air conditioner, but in the winter it reverses action to create warm, comfortable air for your home. Photo © Slavomir Valigursky / 123rf.com

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"Dual fuel systems can strike a good balance between efficiency and power," says Ingram. "We typically recommend a dual fuel heat pump for maximum flexibility."

GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMPS

For the homeowner interested in "going green", a geothermal heat pump is an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional heating appliances. Geothermal pumps are similar to air-source heat pumps in that they condition the air of a home using the transfer of heat. Geothermal power is extracted from heat stored in the earth. In principle, a geothermal pump functions like a conventional heat pump, by using high-pressure refrigerant to capture and move heat between the indoors and out.

SMARTSOURCE

The new SmartSource Inverter Geothermal Water Source Heat Pumps from Daikin McQuay are pushing the bounds of home-heating efficiency even further. The Daikin compressor modulates to match the load requirements, delivering only the required energy to satisfy the space conditions. Efficiency increases as the system unloads, driving the energy efficiency up while maintaining comfort in the living space by keeping the temperature closer to set point. Since most of the operating hours are under partial load conditions, the SmartSource Inverter can take advantage of low airflows while operating quietly at reduced energy levels.

"The new SmartSource Inverter Geothermal units from Daikin McQuay are some of the most energy-efficient HVAC units I've ever seen," says Jason Ingram of Ingram's Water and Air Equipment. "If you want the cutting edge of HVAC technology for your home, this is it, folks."

Learn more about this new technology at www.ingramswaterandair.com.



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However, geothermal systems transfer heat through long loops of liquid-filled pipe that are buried in the ground (or a water source). Because the earth's temperature stays right around 50 degrees, no

matter what the weather is, geothermal systems can easily extract and disburse heat through the 50-degree liquid circulating in its ground loop. This provides a more stable source of heat than conventional

heat pumps, which rely on the outside air as a heat source.

"If you want to maximize your efficiency and savings for the life of your home, you'll never find a better system than a geothermal heat pump," says Ingram. "They're just amazing units."

Geothermal pumps can be used for both forced-air applications and radiant floor applications. Not only do geothermal heat pumps exchange heat more efficiently, but they're much better for the environment than traditional heat pumps due to the reduction in fossil fuel emissions.

RADIANT HEATING SYSTEMS

As an alternative to warm air systems, the technology for radiant heat flooring came to the United States from Europe. A heated floor will radiate heat outward to all areas of the room. During

RETROFITTING YOUR FURNACE OR BOILER

Furnaces and boilers can be retrofitted to increase their efficiency. Older furnace and boiler systems had efficiencies in the range of 56 to 70 percent, but modern conventional heating systems can achieve efficiencies as high as 97 percent, converting nearly all the fuel to useful heat for your home. Energy-efficient upgrades and a new high-efficiency heating system can feasibly cut your fuel bills and your furnace's pollution output in half. However, the costs of a retrofit should be carefully weighed against the cost of a new boiler or furnace, especially if replacement is likely within a few years or if you wish to switch to a different system for other reasons, such as adding air conditioning. — www.energy.gov

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the cold seasons, radiant heat flooring can make the living space comfortable enough for shorts and bare feet in the middle of winter. Radiant systems are available in two types: hydronic and electric.

Hydronic systems generally feature 1/2-in. under-floor flexible PEX tubing that carries hot water across the floor. Hydronic systems can be powered by gas, oil, electricity or solar energy, making them more flexible and economical than electrical systems for whole-house applications.

Electric radiant systems use cables or thin under-floor mats that are wired to work much like electric blankets. These systems are often used to heat small areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and entryways. Electric systems are typically easier to install than hydronic systems and work well in many remodeling projects because many existing homes have electric heat, so it's easier to maintain the same energy source.

"Radiant floor heating is a good way to make a bedroom or bathroom particularly cozy in winter," says Ingram

THE RIGHT SIZE SYSTEM

Before buying any new heating system or modifying your existing unit, first make every effort to improve the energy efficiency of your home, then have a heating contractor determine the size your system. Energy-efficient improvements will save money because you can purchase a smaller system. A properly sized furnace will operate most efficiently, and you'll want to choose a dependable manufacturer and compare the warranties of each system you're considering. When properly sizing a system for a home, a trained technician will use an equation that factors the home's age, the number and quality of its windows, how well it is insulated, how many stories it has, its total square footage and local energy rates.

"When it comes to finding the right system, guessing just won't do it. Absolutely insist your contractor perform a Manual J Calculation on your home," suggests Ingram. The Manual J Calculation is the standard method of calculating heating and cooling loads endorsed by the Air Conditioning Contractors of America. **EHT**

For more information on your home's central heating system, visit the following resources:

Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute: www.ahrinet.org

U.S. Department of Energy, www.energy.gov

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12 Common Painting Pitfalls



immediately after pouring the paint you need. When capping, blow into the container before sealing to increase its shelf life. The carbon dioxide in your breath reduces the oxygen level that causes paint to skin over.

4. For long-term storage, if a can is less than half full, transfer the excess paint to a smaller container to ensure less air exposure. Filter the paint through a paint strainer or nylon stocking when transferring. Use a plastic bag to cut a gasket 1-in. larger than the mouth of the container to help seal the paint inside. Spray cooking spray on the bottom side of the gasket and seat it between the container and lid. Gently tap the lid closed with a rubber mallet, sealing all the way around the rim. To keep full cans for long periods, store them upside down for a month, then right side up the next month, then upside down, etc. This will move the paint's pigment back and forth and keep it from settling out.

5. Don't rush the prep work. Prior to priming or painting, check all surfaces for defects with a strong flashlight held from the side. Rough spots and imperfections will be made clearly visible by the angled light so you can sand or patch them before applying a new coat. You'll be glad you took the time, because otherwise those imperfections will show up distinctly once the new paint is on.

6. Avoid painting with a worn roller. When the roller cover deteriorates, roller material will tear free and become embedded in the new paint. This will cost you lost productivity as you clean the debris

Anyone can paint, but not everyone can paint well. Avoid these common mistakes on your next painting project.

1. Tone it down. If you're considering a bold, vivid color for a big project, think about going a couple of shades lighter. Viewing colors on a small paint swatch can give a different visual impact than seeing them on a large wall. Large surfaces tend to intensify color, and you might end up with a louder color than you intended.

2. Don't paint out of a can. As you paint, the brush picks up pieces of debris that inevitably make their way back into the source can. These little doo-dads

cause specks and lumps in the paint. Also, the air interacting with the paint in the can will dry it prematurely. A better method is to paint from a separate container, working with a 1/2-in. pour of paint at a time, which will encourage you to refresh the paint often, keeping it in a workable fluid state. Plus, carrying a smaller, lighter container is more manageable than a paint can, which should be used only for storage.

3. Store it correctly. Since air is the drying agent of paint, its exposure should be limited if you want to keep it performing like new. Exposure to air thickens the paint, which causes brush marks during application. Keep the can capped

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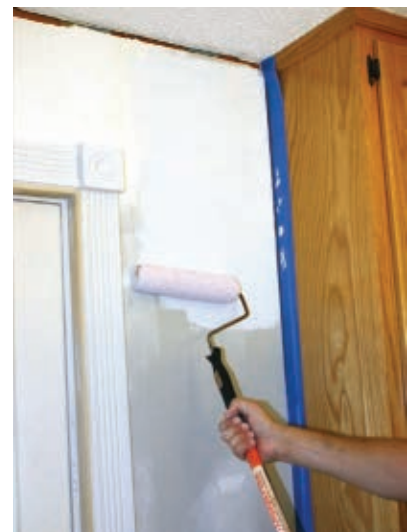
from the paint and re-coat the area. Or worse, you could miss the debris and it could dry into the new coat of paint. Make sure to have replacement covers handy

and keep the roller saturated with paint while you work.

7. Roll it the right way. When used correctly, a roller is a great

tool for laying on a lot of paint in a little time. Hold the roller with the open end pointing toward the direction you're painting. This will keep the cover from slipping off the frame. Paint with three strokes. Starting at the bottom, the first stroke is a long, continuous upward motion to unload the paint. The second stroke is downward to set the paint on the wall surface. The third stroke is upward to smooth the paint. As you begin the third stroke, twist the roller slightly in the direction you are painting. The twist puts extra pressure on the leading end of the roller to deliver maximum paint where it's most needed while simultaneously alleviating pressure on the back end, which helps eliminate ridges in the finish from excess paint. Work across the wall in sections of three or four roller widths at a time.

8. Keep in mind that sometimes painting is a one-way street. For example, one of the EHT project



In some cases you can literally cut corners to increase productivity. For example, don't waste time painting the wall-to-ceiling joint if you'll soon conceal the area with crown moulding.

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houses had an acoustic "popcorn" ceiling that was coated in oil paint. Since the oil coating was water-resistant, the popcorn texture could no longer be easily melted and removed with water when the homeowners wanted to change the look of the ceiling.

9. Painting over new galvanized metal is a common a problem. If possible, allow the metal weather for a year or treat it with a metal primer/prepping agent. Avoid using solvent-borne paints (such as oil-based paints, varnishes or urethanes), which will turn into soap on a galvanized surface and lose adhesion. Use an acrylic or vinyl acrylic paint instead.

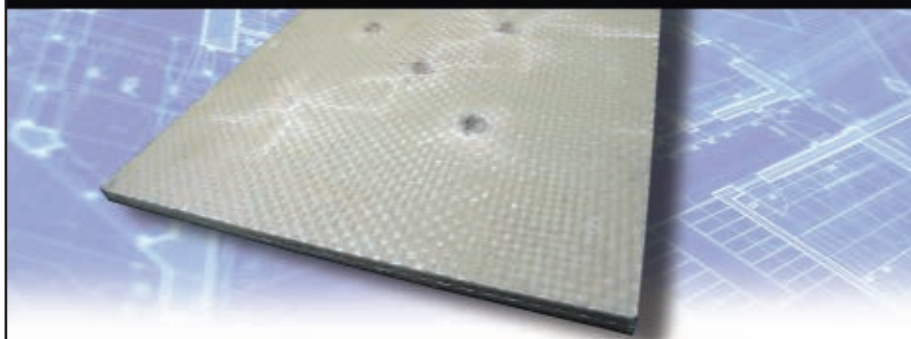
10. Be careful with your masking tape. When applying the tape, use a putty knife or 5-in-1 tool to burnish it to the surface you are masking for the best seal. And always remove the tape immediately after you've finished painting. This helps prevent paint from bridging over the tape and peeling when you remove it. When latex paint begins to dry, it becomes rubbery and has a tendency to pull, which could mess up the crisp lines of the masking and defeat the purpose of the tape.

11. Use the right sheen in the right room. Flat paints conceal imperfections in walls and other surfaces, making them a good choice for ceilings and rooms that aren't exposed to moisture or heavy soiling (bedrooms, home offices, living rooms). High-gloss paints tend to highlight imperfections in walls and woodwork, but they are durable and stain-resistant—and much easier to clean than paints with less gloss. High-gloss sheen is ideal

for windows, baseboards, mouldings and playrooms. Paints with semi-gloss sheen are a smart compromise between the two sheen extremes, providing some

of the benefits of each. They can be used on the walls and cabinets of kitchens and baths. Additional sheens include eggshell and satin, which are less shiny than semi-gloss

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paints so they won't highlight nicks and imperfections quite as much, but since they have a little gloss, they'll be easier to clean than flat paints.

12. Solvent cleaners can be tough on sensitive surfaces. To clean solvent-borne paints off your hands, try ordinary salad oil. Salad oil will take off the paint without irritating your skin like other solvents. It also can help you remove solvent-borne paint spilled on wood finishes that are sensitive to other solvents. **EHT**

If you're considering a bold, vivid color for a big project, think about going a couple of shades lighter. Large surfaces tend to intensify color, and you might end up with a louder color than you intended.



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Demolish Concrete with a “Soft Touch”

Who doesn't love a new way to break stuff?



By Matt Weber

I used a rotary hammer to drill holes for the Ecobust.

Drilling concrete requires a carbide-tipped masonry bit.



I spaced the holes 12-14" apart.

uncle's house. The slab was poured as a foundation to a children's play set, the kids went away to college, and my uncle dismantled the play set. One of the neighbors had used their tractor to push the slab against a fence, out of sight from the front yard, but my uncle still had to figure out a way to dispose of the heavy mass of concrete. That's how I discovered our test slab.

I drilled a series of holes into the slab using a Bosch rotary hammer and a masonry bit. The Ecobust instructions recommended a 1.5-in. hole, but my biggest bit was 1-in. diameter, so I tried to expand the width of the holes as I drilled. The package also includes

Instead of ripping through concrete or stone with a jackhammer—or even explosives—Ecobust is an “expansive demolition agent” that breaks up rock and concrete neatly and silently. The product is basically cement that swells as it cures. Here's how it works: (1) Drill

into the concrete or rock. (2) Mix the powdered Ecobust agent with water. (3) Pour the mixture into the holes. As the agent cures it expands inside the hole, breaking apart the concrete or rock from the inside.

I had the chance to test the stuff on a concrete slab at my

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instructions for hole depth and frequency, depending on the material that you're drilling. For example, I was drilling in unreinforced concrete, so the chart on the can suggested I drill 80-percent through

the depth of the material and space the holes 12 to 14 inches apart.

I mixed the Ecobust agent with a paddle and drill. I used a funnel to pour the slurry into the holes,



The Ecobust powder is mixed with water.



A drill and paddle blended the agent into a smooth slurry.



I used a funnel to pour the mixture into the holes.

Here's the slab w/ all holes filled.



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filling them 1 inch from the top. I then covered the slab with plastic and gave it 24 hours to cure.

When I returned, the agent had cured, hardened and expanded inside the holes, resulting in a slab that was spider-webbed with cracks. The whole thing was easy to pull apart into manageable chunks, ready for a wheelbarrow.

The expanding agent breaks apart the concrete using a quiet and controlled method, without a bunch of racket or flying



I covered with plastic and let it cure for 24 hours.



After 24 hours, the slab was webbed with cracks.

Concrete chunks ready for a wheelbarrow.



shards of rock—perfect for removal of deteriorating porch steps, old footings and more. The demolition creates no dust, noise, vibrations or toxic fumes, which your neighbors

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the SNS200XP is equipped with a high-capacity, all-metal magazine that holds 160 staples. The magazine's innovative removal mechanism provides a clean, narrow site line for precise staple placement into all substrates. In addition, a precision-machined drive track prevents jamming. A dual-action trigger allows continuous "bounce" firing along a work surface at a rate of more than 10 staples per second for high-volume production. Visit www.senco.com.

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Charmaster	50	Red Hill Corp.	70
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Cofair Products	51	RoboReel	21
Crack Seal	27	SafeWorld International	84
Create-A-Bed	42	Sakrete	96
Daich Coatings	90	Sani Seal	24
Drill Doctor	32	Sashco	22, 26
Duck Tape	41	Schlage	39
Dustless Technologies	46	Schluter Systems	13
Ecobust	76	Schroeder Log Home Supoly	70
Elastilon USA	83	Scratch-B-Gone	79
Energy Saving Products	45	Shelves That Slide	91
Ergo Trading	40	Specification Chemicals	94
Fasco America	49	Spring Bolt	6
Franmar Chemical	89	Standard Paints	12
FrogTape	67	T-JAK	42
Galaxie	77	TG Tools	2, 3
Gardner-Gibson	25	The Can Converter	38
General Tools	IFC, 1	The Crown Master Mitre Box	38
Gorilla Glue	47	Therma-Tru	11
GRK Fasteners	7	Thurmalox	6
Hole Pro	30	Timberline	68
Hydro Dimensions	71	TimberTech	31
K&M of VA	64	Tjernlund Products	44
Kemiko	86	Touch 'n Foam	5
Lagesse Products	73	Ty-Lan Enterprises	66
Liquid Nails	15	Vaughan	16
Lumber Liquidators	4	Viance	87
Magnum Heat	43	Wagner	IBC
Maze Nails	23	Warmboard	48
Moduline	68	WaterKing USA	94
MP Global Products	BC	Western Red Cedar	63
New Exakt Saw	94	Woodworker's Hardware	20

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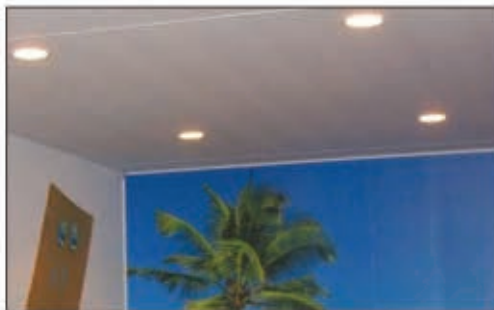
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