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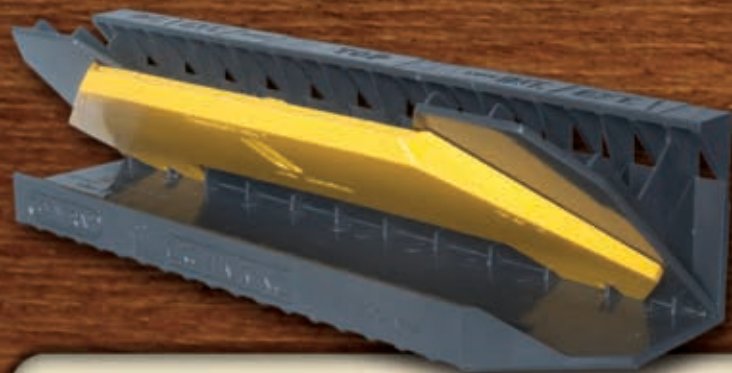


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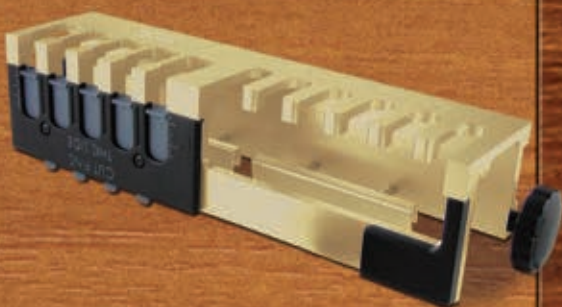
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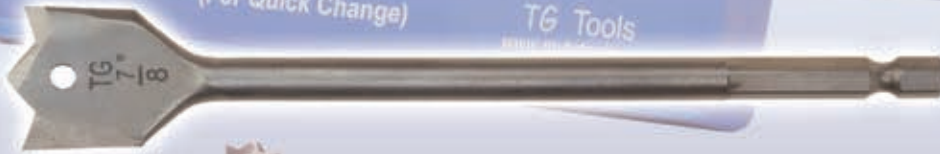
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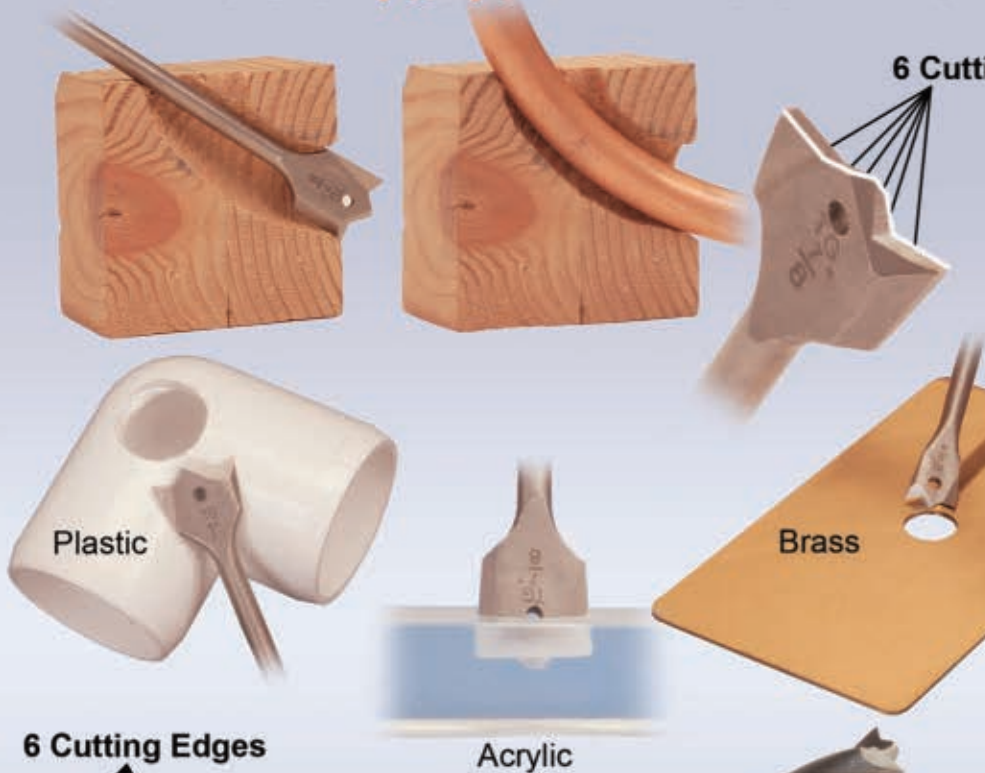


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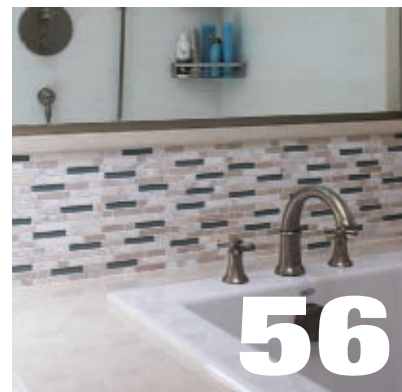
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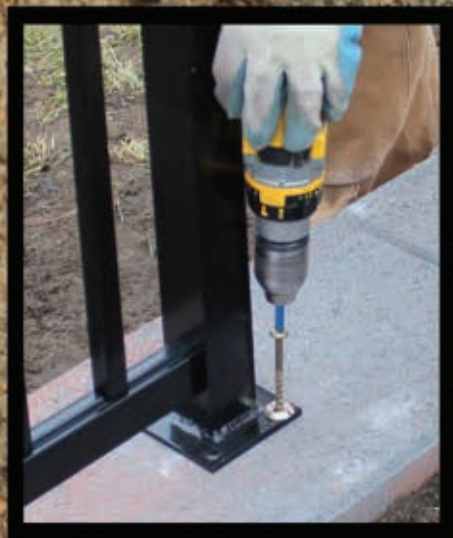
It's soon to be deck-building season. Here are some new product highlights to help outfit your outdoor retreat.

56 Planning a Bathroom Remodel

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In this issue of *EHT* we turn to the pros for some expert advice on home improvement.

Rob Robillard, the "Concord Carpenter", contributes an article in which he demystifies the planning process for a bathroom renovation. A long-time residential contractor, Rob draws on years of experience from remodeling houses to guide you—and your contractor—through the critical planning phase of this common home project.

In addition to fixing up homes and writing for *EHT*, Rob also runs his own website, www.aconcordcarpenter.com, where he reviews tools and offers home-improvement tips.

Another respected construction pro, Mark Clement, lends his expertise to a story on how to get the most from your deck. A seasoned deck builder and home remodeler, Mark offers his professional perspective on the best ways to keep your favorite outdoor living space looking great and lasting longer.

When he's not laying deck boards or knocking out walls, Mark spends his time talking shop on his radio show, which you can find at www.myfixituplife.com.

These guys have a lot of expertise in their fields and a willingness to share it with others. Professional craftsmen are an excellent resource for information when you're tackling a tough project, and they can offer the kind of real-world suggestions that you won't find in a book. If you know any personally, don't be afraid to call them up and pick their brain about problems you encounter in your work. When it comes to

home improvement, there are no stupid questions, forewarned is forearmed, and advice is usually free.

If you don't know any pro remodelers, you can always send your question to us. Drop us an email or visit our blog at blog.extremehowto.com. If one of our staff members can't help you, we'll get in touch with someone who can ... like Rob or Mark.



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Q: When should I begin feeding my lawn for spring?

A: Fertilizing a lawn is a great way to boost the health of the root system to combat heat, cold, drought and other stresses. Plan a feeding in early spring (February to April) to strengthen the lawn's roots for a strong start before the heavy growing season. If the lawn had crabgrass last year, apply a combination fertilizer with a pre-emergent. In late spring (April to June), the growing grass is using stored energy, which necessitates another feeding. If broadleaf weeds are growing too, then feed the lawn with a combination fertilizer with broadleaf weed control (a "weed-and-feed" product).

Q: If I install a pet door, will I get a lot of air intrusion into the house?

A: Today's pet doors have spring-loaded, flexible flap doors with strong magnets that close and seal the door from weather. Some pet doors even utilize an RFID (radio-frequency identification) tag in the pet's collar. As the pet approaches the door, the RFID tag sends a signal that unlocks the door and then relocks it after the pet passes through.

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Q: What is the difference between three-tab roof shingles and "architectural" shingles?

A: In roofing, the term "architectural" generally means the shingle has a three-dimensional design and construction. A true architectural shingle will have more than one thickness to provide enhanced aesthetic appeal. The dimensional design creates a shadow line that gives the roof the appearance of slate or wood shake.

Q: How do I calculate the amount of roofing shingles needed for a roof?

A: Roofing material is calculated by taking measurements of each roof section (length x width) and adding them all together to calculate the area of the entire roof in square feet. Triangular sections of a roof, as with hip roofs, can be computed by multiplying the ridge length by the height of the side, then dividing by half. Add together the area of all the sides of the roof, and then add 10 to 15 percent to account for waste. Roofing shingles are sold by the "square" (100 sq. feet), so determine the number of squares of shingles needed by dividing the total area by 100. **EHT**

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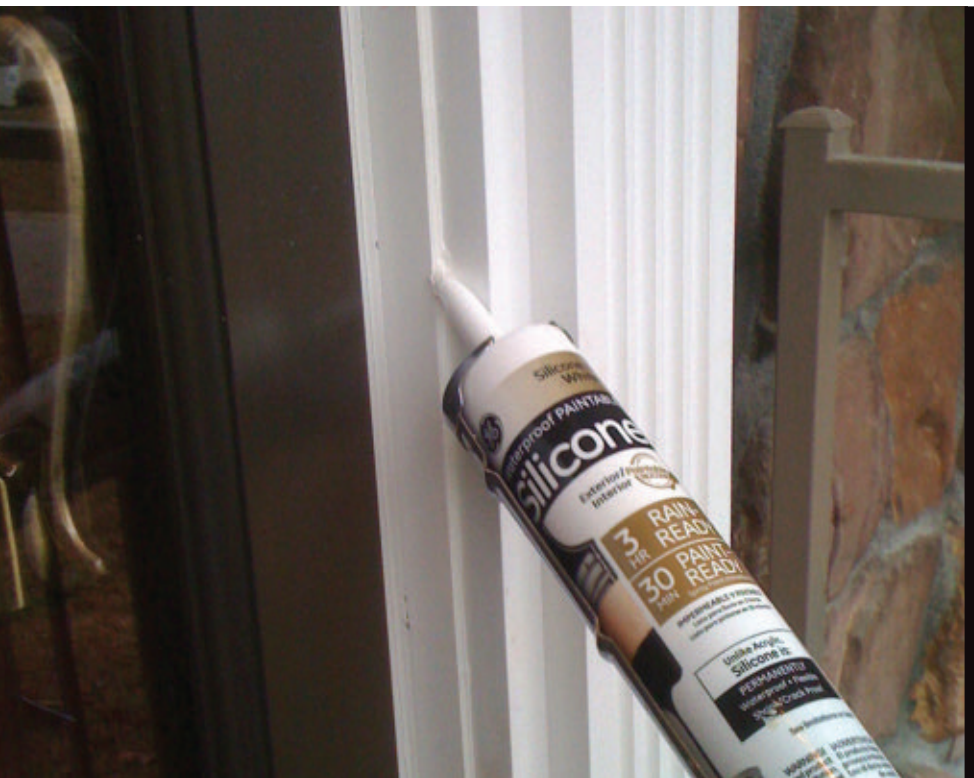
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10 Tips for Caulks & Sealants



Siliconized caulk has long been a favorite for sealing areas exposed to moisture and the elements.

and not intended to serve as a sealant, but it is also the least expensive option.

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 water-based and solvent-based caulk/sealants that have similar hybrid properties, and many of these new sealants serve double-duty as adhesives. Like silicone, solvent- and water-based sealants work well in wet areas where accumulated water would deteriorate acrylic latex.

For use around electrical wires and fixtures, use a fire-resistant caulk as an additional safety measure.

The easiest way to parse the many options is to pay close attention to the indications on the packaging, making sure they match the job at hand. Whether the product is waterproof, paintable or contains a mildewcide additive, all features of the product should be listed prominently on the label.

2. Clean Caulking. 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

By Matt Weber

Applying caulk: It's a messy job, but someone's got to do it. Whether it's an interior or exterior application, *EHT* offers 10 tips to help seal your joints with success.

1. Sealant Selection. When it comes to sealing joints for a trim installation or to weatherproof windows, choosing the right caulk/sealant is the first order of business. 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. Newer formulations of silicone-based sealants can be painted—but only if indicated on the packaging—so pay close attention when buying.

Many pros now prefer polyurethane-based sealants for siding, windows and doors, because it stays flexible and doesn't shrink, it has better adhesion than silicone—plus, it's paintable.

Silicone sealants work well for use in the kitchen and bath. They can be purchased with antimicrobial additives to fight mold and mildew, and can be easily removed and replaced when the bead gets grimy.

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 acrylic caulk is primarily decorative

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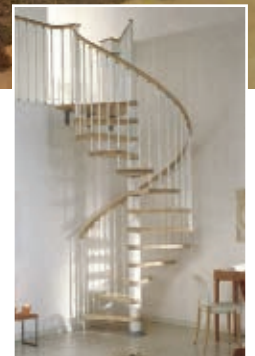
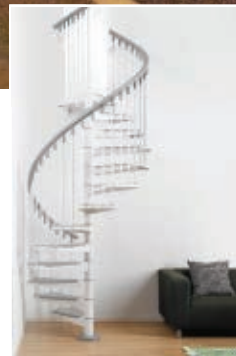


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5. Spray it Smooth. One option for shaping a caulk bead comes in the form of sprayable release agents, such as Caulk EZ. With these products, spray the completed caulk joint, holding the can or bottle 4 to 6 inches away. The release agents prevent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

6. Tools for Tooling. A simple caulk shaping tool is a short wooden dowel (or a variety of dowels of different sizes to create beads of varying sizes). Wet the wood and draw the round end of the dowel over the caulk bead to scrape away excess product and press the bead into a concave shape. Another option is a shaping tool such as the Hyde Caulk-Rite Pro Tool. These new rubberized shaping tools have a large enough working surface to clean away most of the excess caulk while



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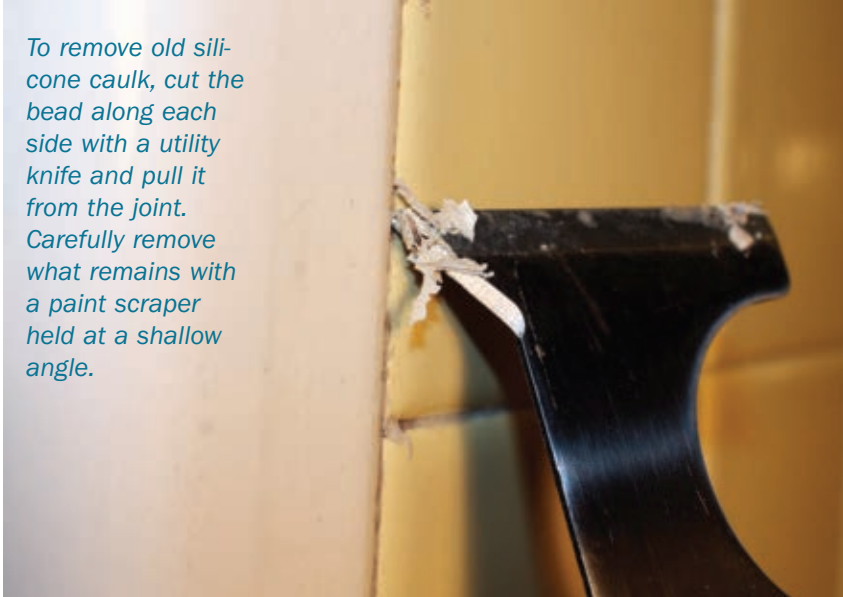
7. Caulk a Tub. When caulking a bathtub, first fill the tub with water. The weight will pull the tub downward, maximizing the size of the

joint. Apply the caulking along the edge of the tub in full contact with both vertical and horizontal surfaces. This prevents future stress and cracking of the caulk joint. Once the bead is dry, drain the water.

8. Remove Old Sealant. To remove a grungy bead of silicone for replacement, cut through each side of the bead with a utility knife and pull it away by hand. If you're lucky, most of the bead will stay intact as a strip. To remove any remaining sealant, scrape it with a paint scraper held at a shallow angle. Finish up by scrubbing the surface with mineral spirits and an abrasive pad to get rid of any residue. Once clean and dry, apply a new bead.

9. Seal Big Joints. To seal a joint larger than 1/4-in. wide, use

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a foam backer rod as a filler before applying the caulk. Less expensive than caulk, the rods provide a cheaper way to fill the empty space than using caulk

alone. Plus, when caulk is applied over a backer rod, it forms an "hourglass" shape with large surface areas of adhesion at the sides of the joint. The hourglass

Masking the joint with painter's tape can create a crisp caulk line with minimal mess.



shape of the caulk bead withstands joint movement better than any other configuration. Furthermore, because there is no caulk adhesion at the rear of the joint, the joint is less susceptible to stresses that cause early failure.



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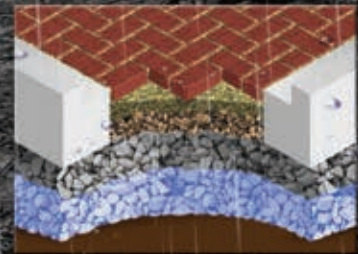
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Squeeze out the last bit of caulk from your tube by using a wood block or dowel as a plunger extension.

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Deck Ledger Code Changes

New Requirements to Resist Lateral Loads



Let's say you own a house with a finished basement and no deck. Let's say you'd like to add a deck by attaching it to your house using a ledger board. Well, depending on where you live, your job may have just gotten significantly more difficult.

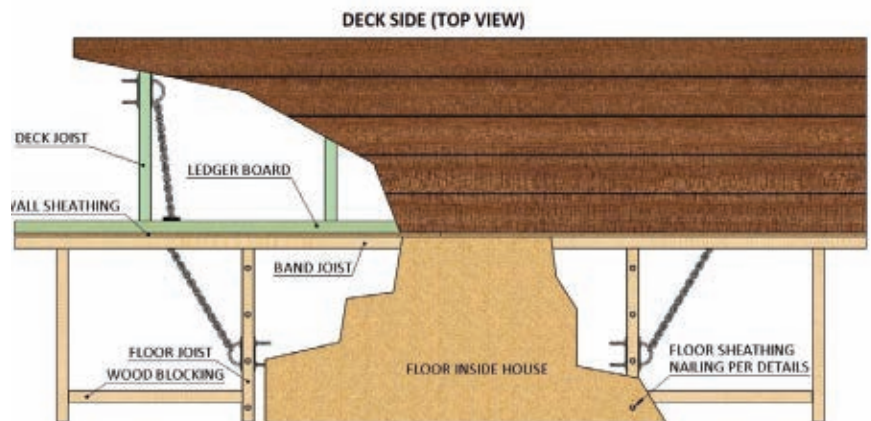
Changes to International Residential Code for projects where decks are supported by an adjacent structure (your house), now require a "positive attachment" to resist lateral loads. That positive attachment is a new piece of hardware called a hold-down device "with an allowable stress design capacity of not less than 1,500 pounds", which must be installed on at least two locations per deck (IRC 2012 Section R507.2.3).

These new hold-down devices must be attached to the joists of the deck, penetrate through the ledger board, the wall sheathing and band joist of the house, and then fasten to the floor framing inside the house.

So, if your home has finished walls, ceiling, cabinets, etc., blocking access to the home's floor framing, then to satisfy the new code requirements you'll need to deconstruct the interior to gain access. Naturally, this code change requires more labor, hardware and expense to building a

new deck, and in some circumstances it may result in even further cost increases to the project, because the homeowner will need to repair the disturbed interior living space.

The change in code was spurred by deck failures caused by ledgers that pull away from the house



The flexible chain of the GRK Deck Harness allows positive connection of house/deck joists that are not aligned.

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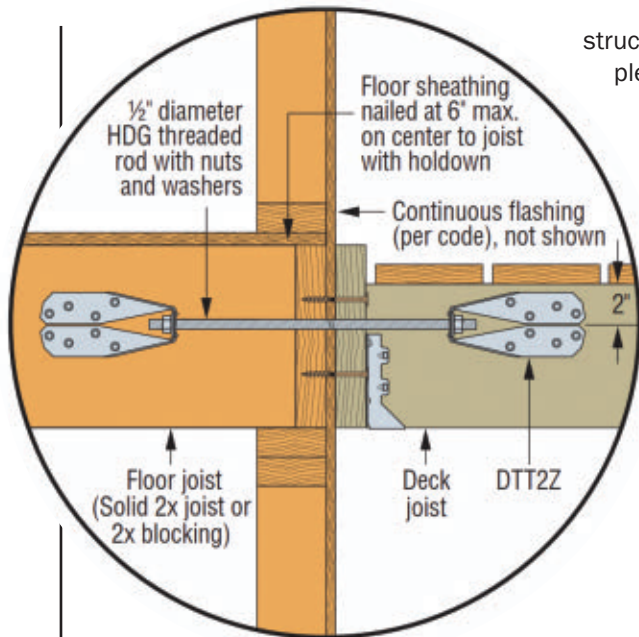


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The Simpson Strong-Tie method utilizes a rigid threaded rod connected to two DTT2Z tension ties to satisfy the code requirement.

structure, resulting in complete collapse. These problems are generally due to improper flashing and/or improper fastening that lead to water accumulation and rot at the ledger connection, weakening the structural integrity.

When properly protected with flashing, a bolted ledger-to-rim board connection—or a connection

fastened with properly spaced and staggered wood structural screws—is a suitable connection to support the gravity load of a deck. However, the new hold-down devices are required to resist *lateral* loads, as required by your local building code. In such a case, the devices should be used to tie the deck joists directly to the house joists.

Whether or not the code change applies to your project depends on whether your municipality has adopted the IRC's code change. Deck construction must always conform to local building codes and may also require a building permit. In general, building codes are developed by industry associations "to provide minimum safety standards for a home's occupants,



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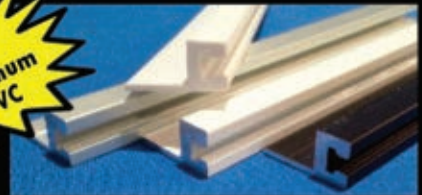
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the environment and the public at large."The codes are adopted and enforced by local governments and vary based on local political issues, environmental regulations, etc. Check with your local building inspector to determine all local requirements.

If your local code requires installation of the hold-down devices, you have a couple of hardware options.

The lateral-load connection from Simpson Strong-Tie consists of two DTT2Z Deck Tension Ties—one screwed to the deck joist, the other to the house joist. Access is drilled through the ledger connection to allow passage of a rigid threaded rod that connects the two ties. This is a sturdy connection that meets the new code requirement and works well for

deck joists that align with the house joists.

However, deck joists don't always line up with the house joists, and the Deck Harness from GRK Fasteners has the advantage of flexibility. By utilizing a chain instead of a rigid rod, it's much easier to adjust placement of the GRK anchors, enabling connection to offset joists, perpendicular joists or to wood blocking. The Deck Harness consists of a steel chain-linked assembly with a thermoplastic plug in the center that installs through the ledger connection. One end of the Deck Harness is attached to the house floor joist with a U-bolt and washer plate. The other end of the Deck Harness is attached to the deck joist with identical U-bolt and washer plate. The GRK Deck

Harness is recognized in the ICC (International Code Council) Report ESR-3224.

The other advantage of GRK's system is that the insulated plug prevents moisture and frost from building up on cold steel and causing a rot problem where the device enters the house. Rotting of the ledger is one of the problems with deck collapses, and the very reason for an additional support to hold the deck up.

In the event of deck failure and the deck separates from the house, these new lateral hold-down devices prevent it from completely collapsing. **EHT**

Learn more about the deck ledger fastening options at www.grkfasteners.com and www.strongtie.com.

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PRO TIPS

TO GET THE MOST FROM **YOUR**



Photo courtesy California Redwood Association

Spruce it up for springtime.

By Mark Clement

No matter the material, all decks and porches require some maintenance. The good news is that regular upkeep is an easy way to preserve your wood deck's beauty for years to come. Since wood comes from nature, it's naturally at home in the outdoors. When properly finished and maintained, many wood varieties will last for decades, even in harsh environments.

To get the most out of your deck, once a year, take the following steps:

1. Inspect the boards for damage such as splitting, warping and major checking ('checking' is cracking parallel to the grain, i.e. "the long way"). An important step here is to check each fastener to be sure none are coming loose. This may require walking the deck back and forth along the joists, to sense any weakness or instability. This also presents an opportunity to check railings and bannisters by pushing them to make sure there is no give.

2. Check that the flashing is still sound and be prepared to replace this essential component if necessary. Flashing is a metal or plastic guard that directs water out and away from sensitive areas (areas prone to hold moisture and thus weaken). Properly installed deck flashing should be roughly "L"-shaped. One leg of the L runs up behind the siding. The other over the top of the board that connects to the house (this is called the 'ledger board').

PRO TIPS

TO GET THE MOST FROM **YOUR DECK**



Photo courtesy California Redwood Association

Remember, flashing is often installed where the deck and house come together, and its purpose to keep moisture and debris from collecting between the house and the deck's ledger board. Pay special attention to any areas that tend to remain damp, are regularly exposed to water (like exposed end-grain on post tops), or are in contact with fasteners. These are areas of stress that need to be carefully examined. Even if no signs of deterioration are present, you still may want to consider proactively adding or replacing flashing if you notice areas in which a significant amount of water is collecting.

3. Check the framing connections. Where the joists meet the ledger board, there should be metal hardware (joist hangers). Nails driven at an angle ('toe-nails') are not a sufficient structural connection. Bolts in post and

beam connections should be 1/2-in. diameter and galvanized.

Check that stairs are of proper rise and run. The combined rise and run of a code-approved stair should be no more than 17-inches: ideally 7-in. rise, 10-in. run (tread depth). Check that they're properly connected to the deck framing and that stair nosings are intact.

Posts, beams and angle bracing should be of appropriate size and spacing. Your local building inspector will be able to tell you what's expected where you live. Generally speaking, however, deck posts should be a minimum 6x6 spaced 6 feet on center.

If you can get under the deck and inspect the ledger, check that proper fasteners—bolts, 1/2-in. galvanized lag screws or structural screws like the RSS screws from GRK Fasteners—not nails—have been used where the deck attaches to the house, since this is a

common source of deck failure.

You will need to replace fasteners that show any signs of significant rusting or corrosion. This is



Make deck maintenance a routine part of your spring or fall clean up and you'll enjoy your favorite outdoor living space for years to come.

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PRO TIPS

TO GET THE MOST FROM **YOUR DECK**



An important first step in deck maintenance is to check each fastener to be sure none are coming loose.

because a corroded fastener can cause deterioration in surrounding wood. Check for nails that have lifted and for screws that show signs of significant deterioration, and replace as needed.

4. Every deck should have an annual cleaning. With regular maintenance, the weathered look of decks usually can be revived with the application of the right deck cleaner. Even if your deck is several years old and showing signs of natural weathering, it's easy to restore the original color and beauty of the wood by applying a cleaning solution and wood brightener. (As with all products, be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for proper use and to make sure you are using the right product for your deck's wood species.)

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Deck cleaners and restorers generally fall into one of three categories—chlorine bleaches, oxygen bleaches, or oxalic acid-based formulas. Chlorine bleaches are especially effective for killing mold and mildew spores, a common cause of stains and discoloration. Oxygen bleaches are effective at removing mildew stains and weathered gray residue from sunlight-degraded wood decks. Oxalic acid products are useful brighteners for a wood deck, but not effective for removing mildew.

If you have a mildew problem, treat your deck with an oxygen or chlorine bleach and water solution (typically 1:3, bleach to water) first and follow it up with an oxalic acid-based product to brighten the wood color. Products with oxalic acid and bleach are also available.



Replace loose fasteners with quality decking screws or spiral/rink-shank nails. Also, inspect the framing connections beneath the deck.

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PRO TIPS

TO GET THE MOST FROM **YOUR DECK**

They will work on deep stains, mold and mildew but these are commercial-grade products and should be handled very carefully. Plants should be pre-rinsed and/or covered. And

siding or doors at the house may need to be shielded so as not to remove or damage their finish. Mold and mildew may require an additional round of scrubbing and application of both Oxalic acid and

household bleach/water solution. For some decks, you might decide to use a powerwasher. However, it is a good idea to check the industry association website of the wood species (pine, redwood, cedar) you are working with to determine if powerwashing is recommended for your deck. If you are powerwashing, always use as low a pressure as possible—between 500 to 600 psi. As a rule of thumb, try to never get closer than 12 inches to the wood deck.



Deck cleaners and restorers generally fall into one of three categories—chlorine bleaches, oxygen bleaches, or oxalic acid-based formulas.

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Some powerwashers have detergent reservoirs and are good for applying lots of mild detergent. You can get more control using a simple garden sprayer, especially

with the stronger detergents. You'll get slow, even coverage that's easy to apply.

Let the detergent sit on the deck the manufacturer-recom-

mended period of time. This gives the detergent time to break down the stain. It's kind of like soaking dirty pans in the sink before scrubbing them. Use a synthetic bristle—never steel or wire—brush to agitate the solution. Keep a 5-gallon bucket of straight water handy to rinse the debris from the brush bristles as needed. Work up and down the length of the deck boards instead of across them, and don't apply more detergent than you can remove in the recommended period of time.

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Shown here are two simple methods to protect the surface when maintaining your deck. When driving down loose nails, an old circular saw blade can provide a shield around the fastener to prevent damage from hammer blows.



When you need to pry out an old fastener, a scrap of aluminum flashing protects the wood-grain from being crushed by pressure from the hammer.



detergent you're working with for the recommend application direction. Some will recommend applying from the bottom up. Others, the top down. The reason for this is to prevent streaking, which once it's started, you can't stop it.

You won't need to do this every year but you'll want to keep an eye on your deck's finish and refinish it as needed. A simple test to see if it needs refinishing is to pour a cup of water on the deck surface. If water droplets form, your finish is still performing well. However, if the water sinks in quickly, it's probably time to reapply a sealant. If a treatment is needed, the best time of year is generally during the spring and fall when temperatures are more mild and consistent.

If you determine that you need to refinish your deck, it's always a good idea to remove any dirt or debris before applying a finish



As with all products, be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for proper use and to make sure you're using the right product for your deck's wood species.



Even if your deck is several years old and showing signs of natural weathering, it's easy to restore the original color and beauty of the wood by applying a cleaning solution and wood brightener.



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PRO TIPS

TO GET THE MOST FROM **YOUR DECK**

(just follow the cleaning steps above). You'll want to allow several days for the deck to dry completely before refinishing.

Make these steps a routine part of your spring or fall clean up and you'll enjoy your deck for years to come. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Mark Clement is a tool and how-to expert, regular contributor to DIY magazines and TV, a contributing editor to Extreme How-to and spokesperson for the Softwood Lumber Board.

If you are powerwashing, always use as low a pressure as possible—between 500 to 600 psi. As a rule of thumb, try to never get closer than 12" to the wood deck.



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DECK PRODUCT ROUNDUP

By Matt Weber

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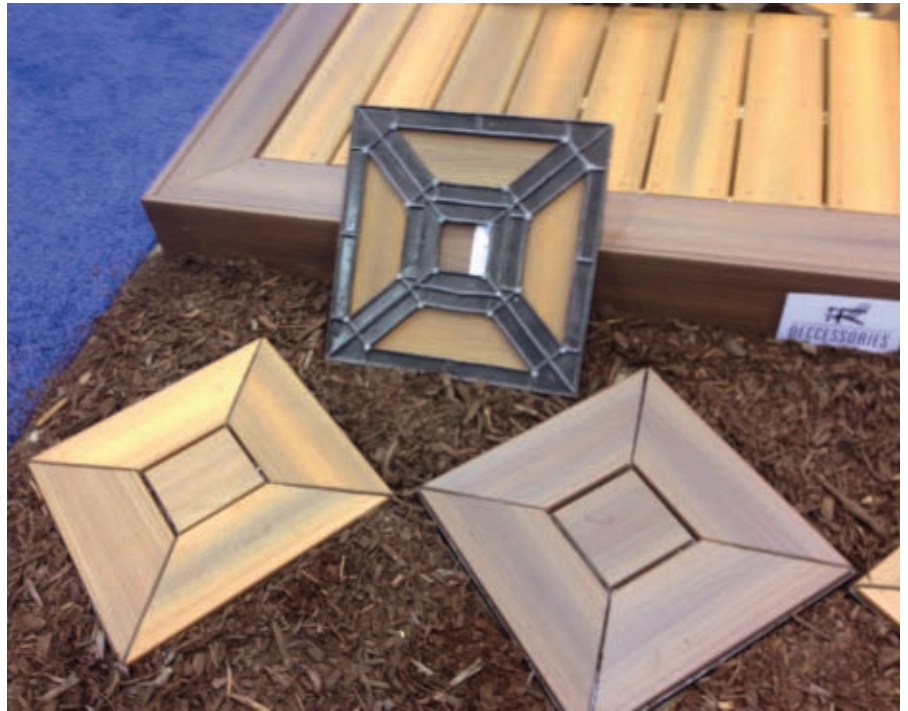


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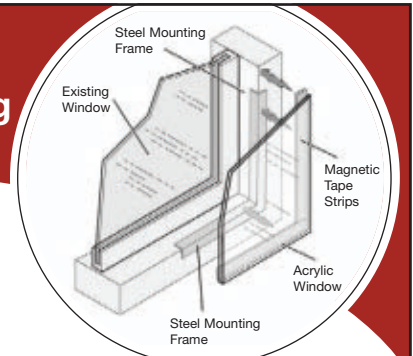
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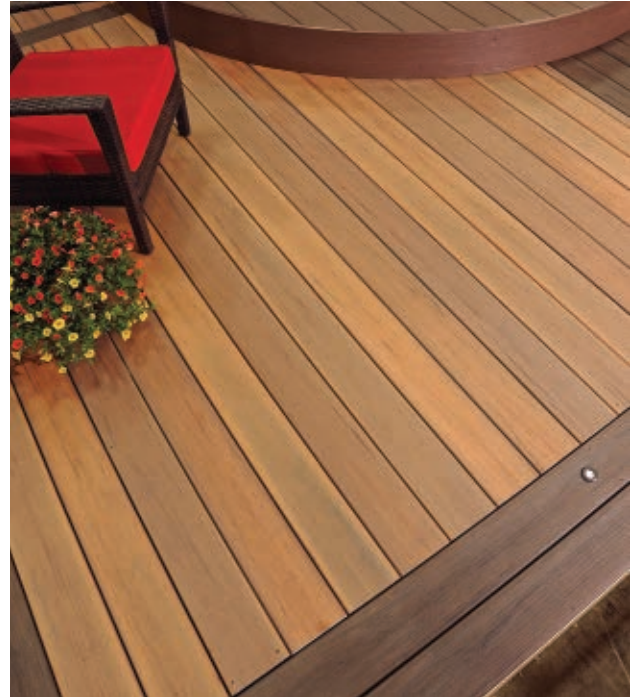


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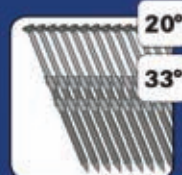
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for water and debris to flow harmlessly through the assembly, while promoting circulation and drying. The Deck2Wall Spacers have attachment holes to keep

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PLANNING A BATH



ROOM REMODEL

By Rob Robillard

Many people do not know how to plan a bathroom remodel. As a restoration contractor I've seen many situations where homeowners have spent thousands of dollars in restorations that commence with no planning, no idea of a budget and with unrealistic expectations. Whether you're a contractor or a homeowner doing the work, the planning process is the same. The premise of this article is to explain the process and help you develop a detailed scope of work that you can communicate in clear and concise terms.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Ask questions, look at other projects and research your products and materials before starting. There is a ton of "product"

at supply stores and on the internet to compare and contrast. Consider using a checklist for manufacturers of fixtures, appliances, hardware, etc. I always suggest using products from quality manufacturers with a proven track record.

This is also the time to reach out for help on your design, if needed. For example, if you're moving walls, do you need an architect to prepare detailed drawings? Having a drawing helps folks visualize the final product.

For the contractor, the goal of detailed drawings is to work out spatial issues, to anticipate design issues and to eliminate surprises. This also provides a picture for you and the contractor of what the finished product will look like.

Decisions are better streamlined with a drawing, which helps prevent subcontractor

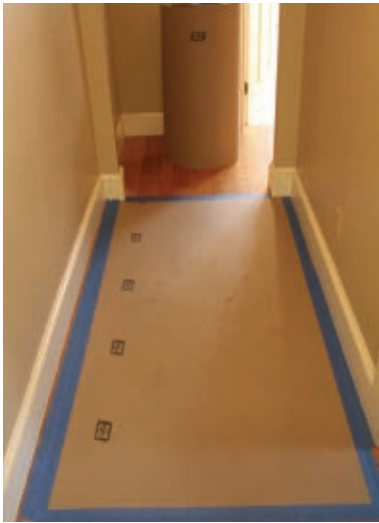
*Preparation, coordination and communication are
your keys to success.*

PLANNING A BATHROOM REMODEL

tors and workers from being hit with unexpected decisions or products requiring additional labor and/or materials to install.

Plan Your Remodel before Starting

Having a plan doesn't mean picking out tile and paint colors and then smashing out the walls.



Not only is bathroom remodeling a messy job, but demolition debris that is tracked through the house can damage finished surfaces. Plan in advance to manage dust and debris. Contractor paper taped along the edges can protect hardwood floors.



A canvas drop cloth makes a flexible and reusable protective cover for stairs surfaced with wood or carpet.



Determine a comprehensive plan to complete the project prior to starting demolition.

It means thinking through the whole process, writing it down and trying to anticipate problems, time sinks and construction roadblocks.

Prior to starting the project, take the time and effort to thoroughly inspect the home and come up with a plan of approach. Hire an architect or general contractor to inspect and work up a scope of work. Plan so that one phase of the project transitions logically to the "next step."

Many people assume that the

contractor will make logical decisions in scheduling and planning the project. The fact is that a bathroom project involves numerous different subcontractors, and every one of them has their own schedule and agenda. Getting these folks to physically see the site, submit a proposal and commit to a schedule can be quite a task, but is imperative to do.

Your bathroom is about to become a construction area. Discuss and establish ground rules with your contractor,

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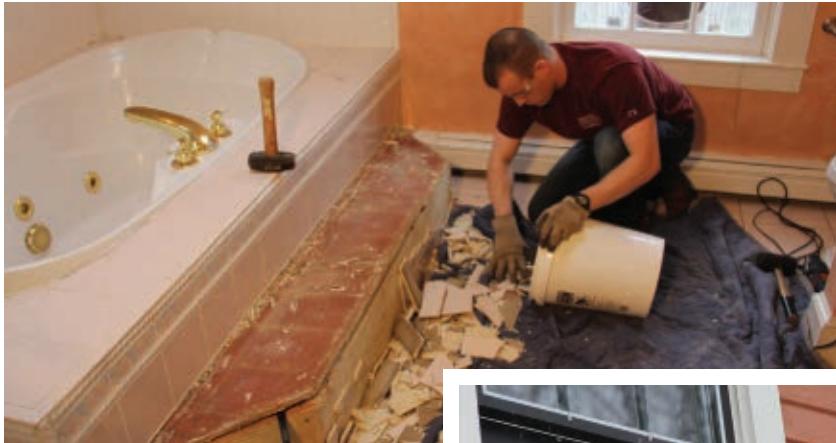


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Bathroom demolition creates a substantial amount of garbage in the form broken drywall and shards of tile. Plan a way to dispose of the material in an orderly fashion.

Second-story remodels can utilize a garbage chute at the bathroom window.



such as where lumber and materials will be stored, jobsite clean-up, dumpster location, use of the toilet and parking of vehicles. Also, discuss debris removal and dust containment.

A clean job eliminates safety hazards and helps to keep the clients at ease; it also presents a more professional appearance for the contractor.

Murphy's Law: Throw in a Monkey Wrench!

When planning a bathroom remodel, prepare yourself for hidden conditions that will add more expense, more time, more disruption and problems than you planned on. Surprises of one kind or another are common and even "predictable" when remodeling a bathroom. The key is to plan for that extra time beforehand to avoid stress.

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The garbage chute channels demolition debris to a trash can or dumpster on the ground.

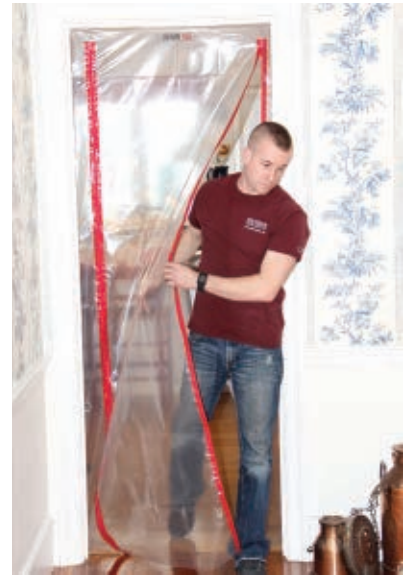
Many people have no clue about the “hidden costs” of remodeling, and a lot of contractors do not advise their clients of them. Hidden conditions include

things like repairing surprise termite damage, improper wiring, outdated plumbing, abating asbestos or repairing foundation damage. Any or all of these can stop a remodel process mid-point and add time and money to the project.

Plan for these conditions by allocating 10 to 20 percent of your budget to address them. Whatever your project's estimate, I promise that you will most likely spend additional money on hidden conditions.

PREPARE YOUR BUDGET

Proceeding with no budget is just plain stupid unless you have access to limitless cash. Define a scope of work with your contractor to arrive at a professional, accurate and performable



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Innovation Rules

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budget. Unrealistic budgets are common among homeowners that have not researched costs or don't understand what is involved in a bathroom remodel.

Many people try to get a contractor to make an unrealistic budget a reality, and the end result is that corners get cut. At a minimum you will need a well-detailed proposal for your bathroom remodel.

In my opinion, vague proposals and plans encourage low bidding and invite many hidden and sometimes costly "extras" to be tacked onto the job later. Not having a detailed plan also means that two different contractors bidding on the same project will never arrive at the same conclusions and will always make assumptions to fill missing information—resulting in an "apples to oranges" comparison.

Not having a well detailed plan

means the contractors bid only on what they "gleaned" from your verbal communication. Some unprofessional contractors will take this as an opportunity bid low and hit you later with extra costs.

PROJECT COORDINATION

Coordination is commonly the job of a general contractor or architect. Without a schedule and proper coordination the individual tradespeople are



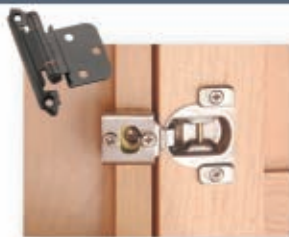
A bathroom project involves numerous different subcontractors, and every one of them has their own schedule and agenda. It's imperative for these folks to physically see the site, submit a proposal and commit to a schedule.

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segregated, disjointed and will not communicate.

For example: Adding a simple whirlpool tub to a bathroom remodel also means that you first need to install a 20-amp

circuit. This involves installing a wire from the main electrical service to that tub—a step that can be easily overlooked by a homeowner or contractor if coordination and communication does not occur



Plan so that one phase of the project transitions logically to the "next step."



Discuss with your contractor such issues as smoking policy, playing of music, music volume, use of profanity, and private or restricted areas.

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between the plumber and electrician. Everyone needs to work together.

Part of this coordination is to bring in your sub-contractors early to look at the space and your fixture selection schematics and installation requirements.

GATHER YOUR FIXTURES

A bathroom remodel requires fixtures, cabinets and counters. Prior to starting your bathroom remodel, take the time to identify manufacturers and make your selections early.

Early selection ensures that your contractors know what you want installed and can price accurately. It also gives them



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the opportunity to work out any structural, electrical or plumbing issues, and to determine if that fixture is going to work in the bath space or not.

Get your fixtures ordered and on

site prior to starting the job. I've seen many times a special-order toilet or tub arrive damaged or lost in transit, and the entire project comes to a stop for three weeks while we waited for another one.

The best practice is to get the fixtures on site where they can be inspected and stored for the project.

By making your plumbing fixture, recessed mirrors and lighting decisions early, you're more likely to stay on schedule, save time and money.

COMMUNICATION IS CRITICAL

Once you start your bathroom project it is important to maintain regular communication with your contractor. That usually means a daily meeting or phone call. Avoid emails, as they can be misleading and not contain enough information. It's best to meet in person to discuss and then summarize that meeting in an email.

Good communication will allow you to handle unexpected issues quickly, make timely decisions and move forward.

SUBCONTRACTORS

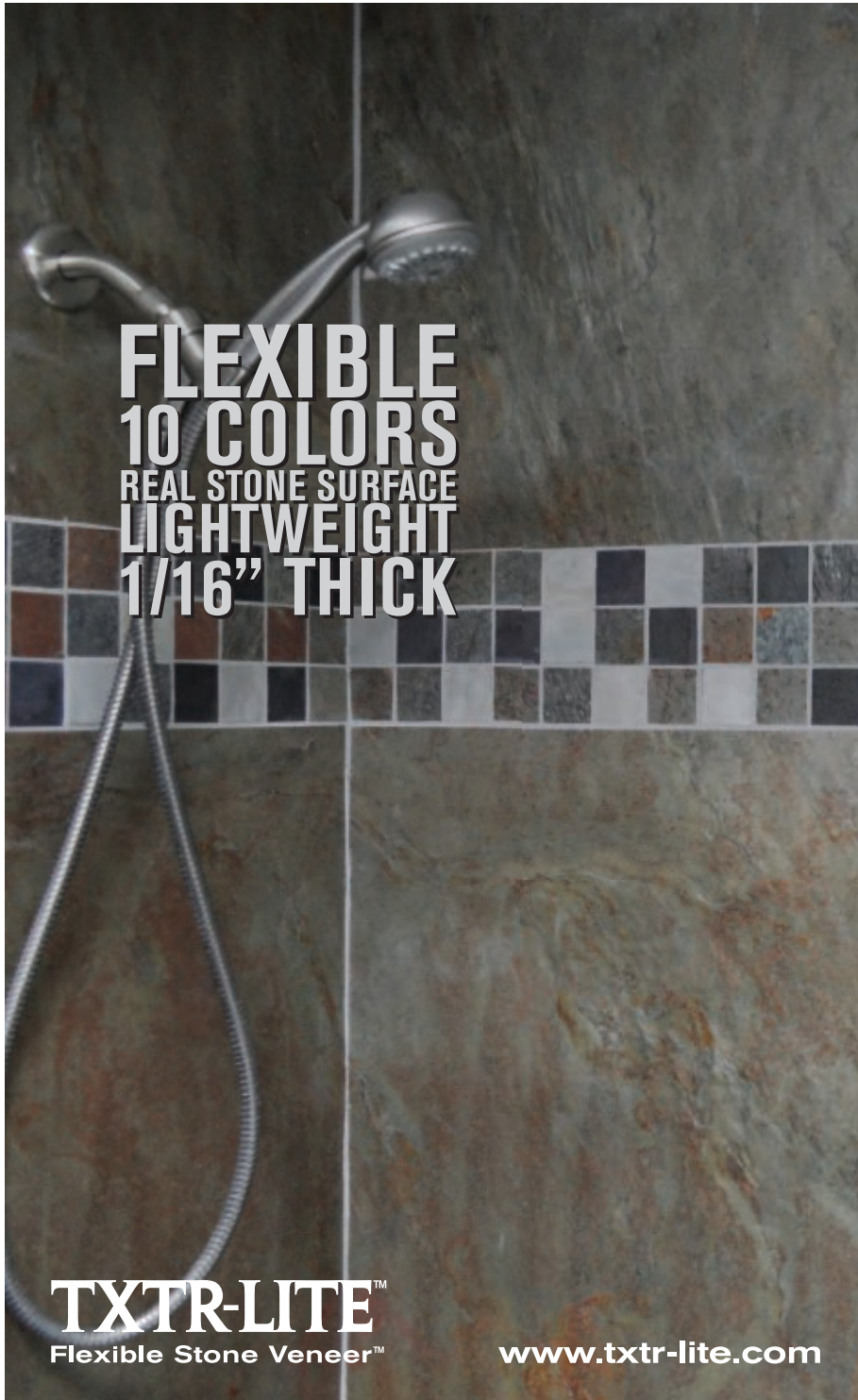
Good contractors hire good subcontractors.

You should have a discussion with your contractor about subcontractor ground rules while at the work site. Discuss issues such as a smoking policy, playing of music, music volume, use of profanity and private or restricted areas.

One thing a lot of folks overlook is that subcontractors are specialists in their field and can offer a lot of industry training and experience to resolve issues and solve problems. Make sure you utilize their expertise.

BIG PICTURE

Proper planning prevents unnecessary roadblocks and helps you realize your vision by defining your space. Realistic schedules need to be produced. A proper sequence of events should be spelled out clearly so that the necessary materials are



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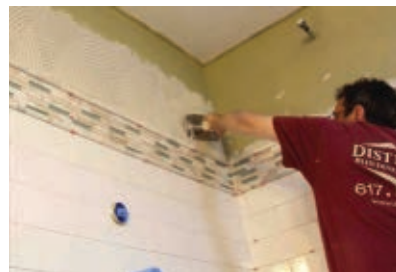
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PLANNING A BATHROOM REMODEL

on hand at the right time. In other words, don't gut the bathroom until the plumbing fixtures and vanity cabinet are on site and ready to install. By being informed

and expecting the unexpected, you can minimize stress, costly errors and maximize your budget to arrive at a spectacular bath remodel project. **EHT**



Proper planning, coordination and communication will help your project run smoothly and better prepare you for the surprise challenges that come with every bathroom remodel.

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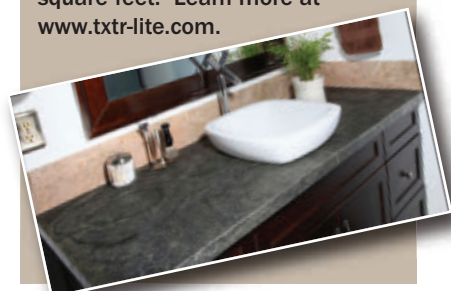
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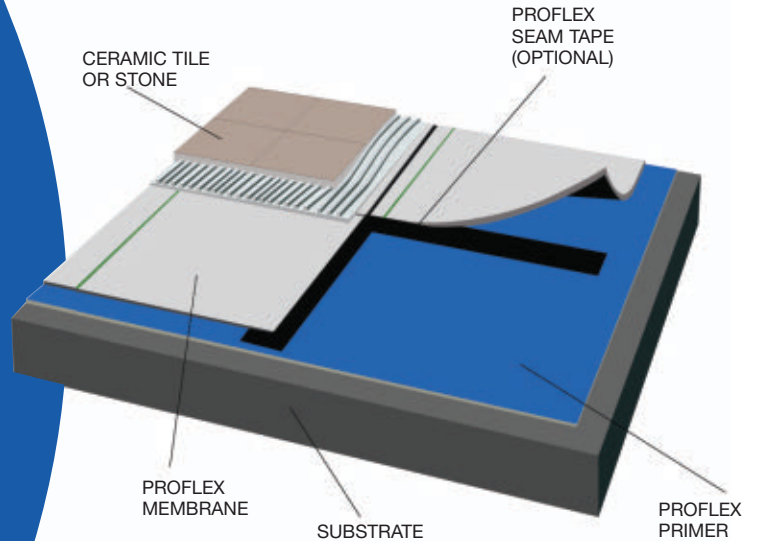


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Waterproofing:

Specific Proflex membranes may be used in some waterproofing applications (contact technical support for additional information).

Sound Reduction:

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Super Simple TV Shelf

Here's an easy-to-make accessory shelf for a wall-mounted television.



By Matt Weber

If you have a free afternoon, a couple of shelf brackets and some spare plywood, you can organize a wall-mounted TV the way we did.

Although ready-made TV mounting hardware nicely supports a flat-screen on a wall, such systems do not accommodate a satellite receiver or Blu-ray player. After installing a new wall-mounted flat screen, a handful of cables dangled down the wall from the TV to the top of a dresser, where they were connected to the accessory electronics. It was a disorganized mess, so I built a shelf to streamline the look.

This is a simple project that requires only a few critical measurements. Measure the electronics you need to hold, making sure to

leave ample room for the cords or cables that plug into the rear of the console. Also, measure the width of the television. The size of your shelf should strike a balance between a large enough size to support the TV accessories while small enough to look proportional to the TV screen.

I cut the shelf from 3/4-in. oak plywood. To hide the unfinished edge of the plywood, I wrapped the front and sides of my shelf with solid oak edging. I ripped the oak strip to 1/4-in. thick, and used its 1x (3/4-in.) height to completely conceal the plywood edge. Note: Remember to account for the thickness of the edging when determining your shelf size.

The shelf was supported by metal shelf brackets mounted into

the wall studs with heavy-duty screws. Since the shelf was to be mounted over a dresser, we chose brackets with an arched, concave design to retain as much under-shelf dresser space as possible.

The power outlet and satellite connection were located at the floor level and behind the dresser. To manage the wires, I drilled into the drywall to route the wires behind the drywall and through the stud cavity to a second access hole near the power outlet.

If you decide to route the wires through the wall, make sure to check the wall with a stud finder to ensure there is no between-the-stud blocking in the wall or other obstruction that would interfere with routing the wires. If you are unable to hide the wires inside the wall, an alternative solution is to install wire molding, which conceals the wires in a plastic channel. You can then paint the wire molding to match the wall color.

STEP BY STEP



The jumbled wires and cumbersome TV accessories were an unsightly mess in this bedroom.

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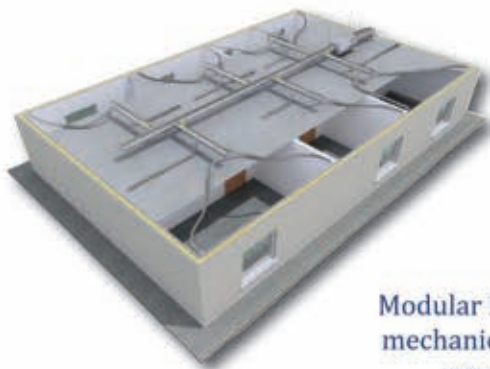
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QUICK FIX

To solve the problem, the shelf should be deep enough for the largest of accessories, plus the necessary clearance for cords connected at the rear.

The shelf should be wide enough for the accessories without looking out of proportion to the TV set.

Trim the shelf stock to size, accounting for the extra 1/4" edging at the sides and front.



Locate the studs on the wall. Center the shelf over the studs and transfer those measurements to the underside of the shelf to mark the shelf brackets.

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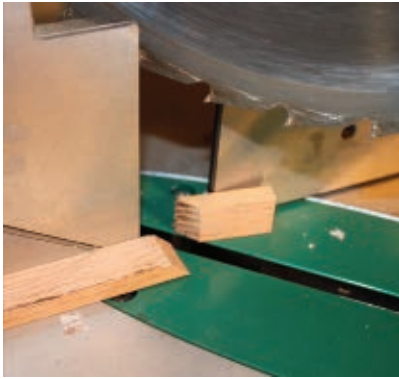
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Trim the edging to size, cutting 45-deg. miters at the corners.



Sand the shelf in the direction of the wood grain with progressively finer abrasive to 220-grit.



Test-fit the edging.



The edging was installed with a combination of wood glue and finish nails, with holes predrilled for the nails.

Use paintable wood putty to fill all joints and nail holes.

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QUICK FIX

Dust the shelf with a tack cloth and apply wood stain. I chose a gel stain because it doesn't run and is easy to work with.

Once dry, apply two or three coats of polyurethane, lightly scuff-sanding between coats.

Screw on the shelf brackets with 1/2" wood screws.



Just above the surface of the shelf location, where the hole would be concealed by the satellite receiver, I used a 1-3/4-in. hole saw to drill access for the cables. I made a second hole at the floor near a power outlet.

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I protected the edges of the access holes with plastic computer grommets.



Center the shelf beneath the TV. Fasten one shelf bracket into a stud, then level the shelf.



Once level, drive home the second screw. I used 2-1/2" R4 construction screws from GRK Fasteners to sink solidly into the framing.

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QUICK FIX



I masked the fastener heads using paper (with a dime-sized hole cut in the center), and spray-painted the heads black to match the brackets.

Finish up by using fish tape to route the cables from the shelf, through the wall, and out of the lower access hole where they plug into the outlet. **EHT**



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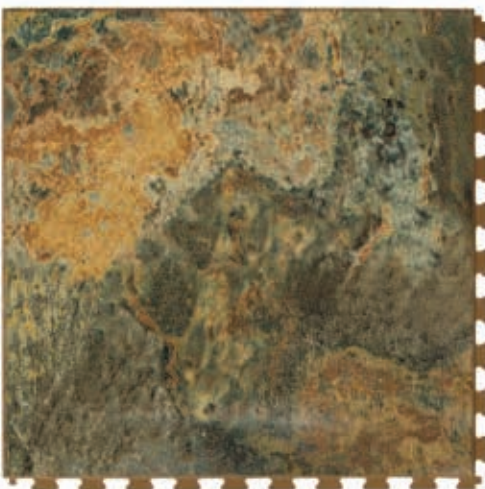
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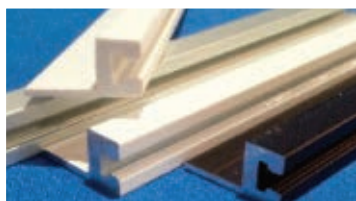
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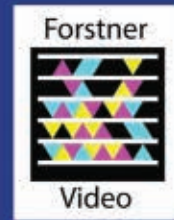


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