

# 101 HANDY HINTS® Collector's Edition

**CELEBRATING 500 ISSUES**  
**WITH CLEVER SOLUTIONS TO EVERYDAY PROBLEMS**



THE FAMILY  
**Handyman®**  
J U L Y 2 0 0 9

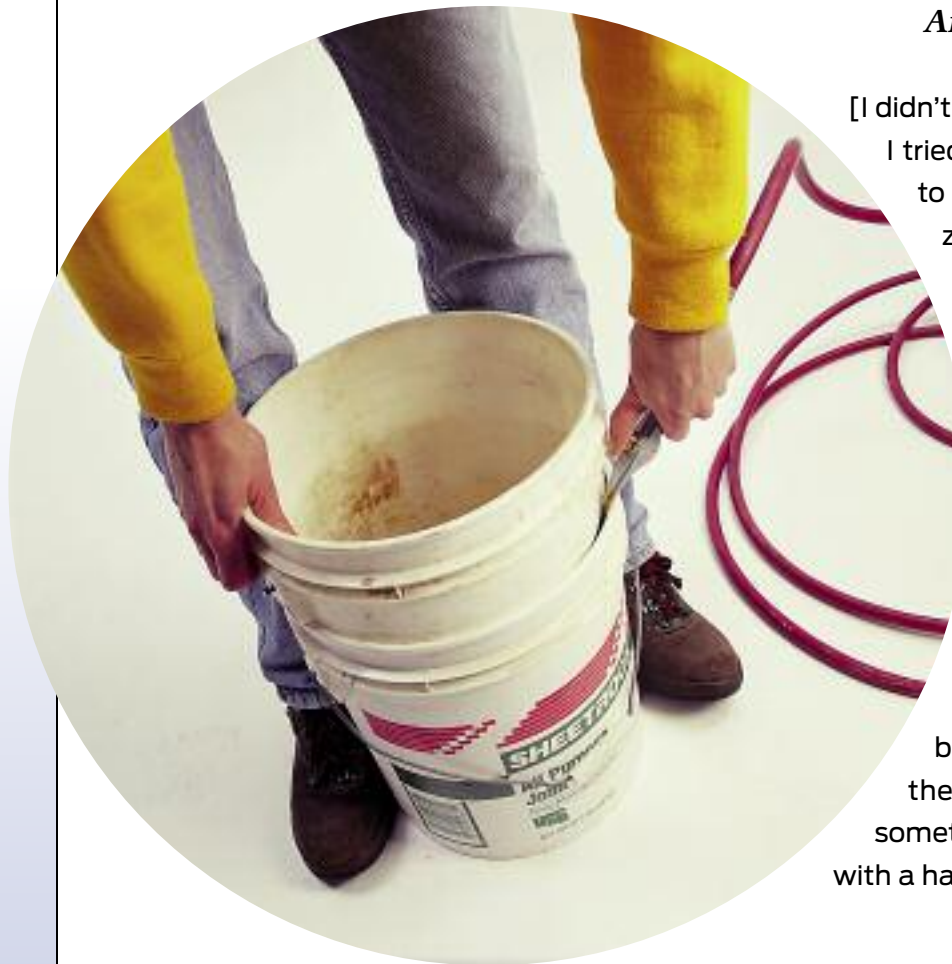
# 101 Handy Hints®

## 1 Blow apart stuck 5-gal. buckets

My dad and I have figured out a way to get those stuck-together 5-gallon pails apart nearly every time. We just push an air nozzle between the buckets and blow compressed air into the lower one.

*Amber Williams*

[I didn't believe this until I tried it. The secret is to push the air nozzle tip into the side of the top bucket to create a path for the air to get into the bottom one. The top bucket is propelled by a cushion of air and lifts right out. It sure beats pounding them apart—and sometimes to pieces—with a hammer.—Editor]



## 2 Stain-saving spray applicator

Save your empty pump-type sprayers that have an adjustable-spray tip and use them to apply wiping stain. Spray a small section at a time, then wipe it. You'll be surprised how little stain you use to complete the job this way compared with brushing. This technique is especially helpful for applying stain to intricate parts like spindles.

*Ashley Bradberry*





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## 3 See-through junk drawer in a bag

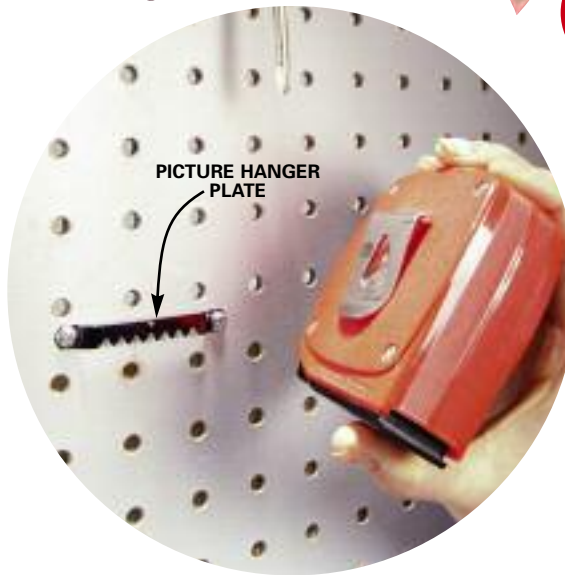
I store my extra fasteners in a clear plastic bag instead of a coffee can or junk drawer. Searching for the correct nut, bolt or whatever is as easy as looking “through” the bag, reaching in and plucking it from the mix.

*Gail Snyder*

## 5 Duct tape wristbands

When you’re working with fiber-glass insulation, tape the cuffs of your long-sleeved shirts to gloves with duct tape. It’ll keep the glass fibers from getting under sleeves and irritating your skin. Your wrists will thank you.

*Carl Jensen*



## 4 Tape measure holder

Since I’ve never had a specific place to store my tape measure, I could never find it when I needed it. I solved the problem by screwing a large picture hanger plate onto the wall behind my workbench. Now, I hook the tape measure onto the hanger when I’m finished and have no trouble finding it at all.

*John Lee*

## 6 Spray can nozzle cleaner

Nozzles from cans of spray paint tend to clog with dried paint after use. Here’s a trick to keep them clear for the next project. Remove the nozzle and stick it on your can of WD-40 (most are the same size and shape). Just give the nozzle a quick squirt to clear it out, then return the nozzle to its rightful place.



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## 7 Posthole gauge

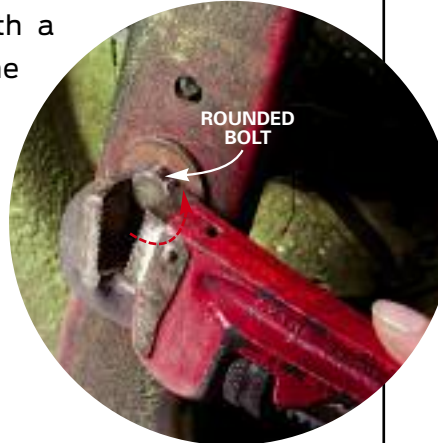
Digging a posthole requires you to constantly stop and remove the digger to measure the depth of the hole. Skip the hassle by turning the handles of your posthole digger into built-in measuring sticks. With a permanent marker, make a line every 6 in. up the handles from the tips of the digging blades. When you get close to the desired depth, stop digging (leaving the digger in the hole) and check the depth on the handles.

**Bill Robinson**

## 8 Wrench for rounded bolt heads

Loosen bolts with worn, rounded heads with a pipe wrench! The pipe wrench jaws dig in and grab the head so you can remove the bolt.

**Jeff Larson**



## 9 High fly sucker-upper

We live on a farm, so keeping flies out of the house and evicting them once they've moved in is a constant headache. When they swarm against the inside of the windows, we simply suck them up with a vacuum cleaner nozzle. The problem was that the hose didn't reach the skylights. Then my husband thought of duct-taping a 10-ft. length of PVC pipe onto the end of the nozzle. Now we can suck flies down from the highest skylights in the house.

**Louise Veldhuizen**





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## 10 Screw-lube on a string

Drill a hole through a bar of soap and hang it above your workbench. Run long screws across the soap before you drive them and they'll smoothly penetrate the wood without stripping the screwhead.

*Brian Bubenzer*



## 11 Tinfoil couch-saver

Keep your cats off the couch with tinfoil. Tear off a piece of tinfoil long enough to cover the top of your couch, and set it on the cushions. The feel and sound of tinfoil drives cats nuts and they'll immediately jump off.

*Carolyn Quintiliano*



## 12 Movable bike rack

Tired of that darn bike hanging in your way? Build this movable bike rack from a 2x4 and a pair of bicycle hooks. Cut four 3-1/2-in. blocks, stack two on top of each other, and screw them together. Now screw them on the end of a 4-ft. 2x4 and repeat the process for the other side. Drill a hole in the middle of the stacked blocks and screw in the bicycle hooks. Lay the rack across your garage ceiling joists, and hang your bike from the hooks. When you need to get behind the bike, simply slide the entire rack out of the way.

*Kitty Fay*





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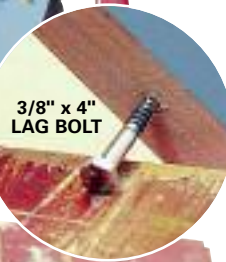
## 13 Disguising caulk on concrete

If you're caulking concrete, either to fill a crack or to seal it around the edge, you can make the caulk almost invisible. Simply dust the caulk with dry concrete mix while it's still wet. When it's dry, brush away the excess, and the caulk will virtually disappear.



## 14 Door painting helper

Paint both sides of a door at once with this nifty trick. Purchase three 3/8-in. x 4-in. lag bolts at a hardware store. Screw one into the center of the top edge and the other two into the bottom edge 6 in. in from each end. Paint one side of the door, then lift the door by the two bolts and flip it over using the single bolt as a pivot. Now paint the edges and other side of the door. When the door is dry, remove the bolts, fill the holes with putty and touch up with paint.

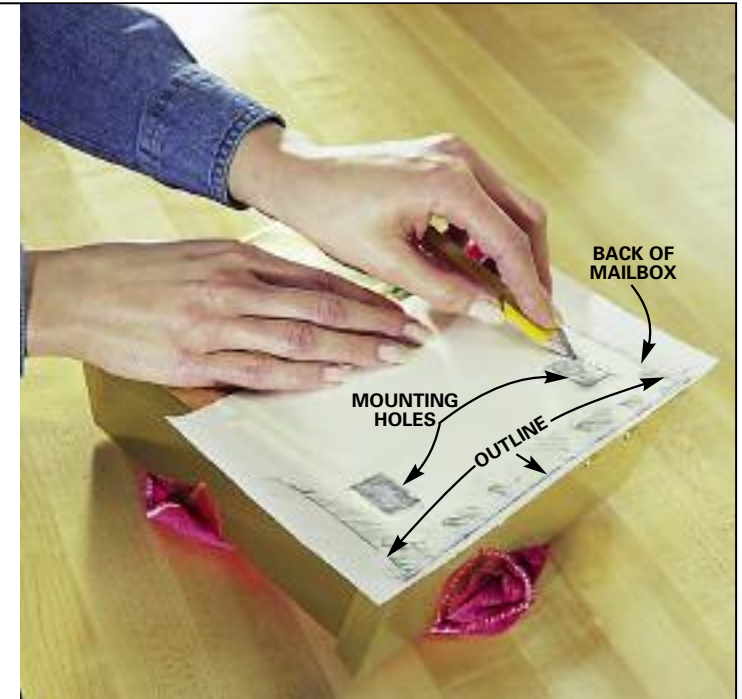


*William G. Freed*

## 15 Scratch that layout

Items that have mounting holes on the back can be tricky to hang level. To ease the layout process, make a template. Set a piece of paper over the back side of the item and rub over the outline and mounting holes with a pencil. Level and tape the template into position on the wall, then drill pilot holes and secure the fasteners. P.S. If the mounting holes are oddly spaced, make sure you don't reverse the template when you tape it to the wall.

*Ron Ross*



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## 16 Air hose station

Keep your air hose and fittings in one place and out of the way. Screw a coffee can onto a scrap piece of plywood. Attach a 2-1/2-in. riser block to the edge of the plywood and hang the entire contraption from a wall or workbench. Drape your air hose over the coffee can, and store your fittings inside. It also works great for hanging extension cords.

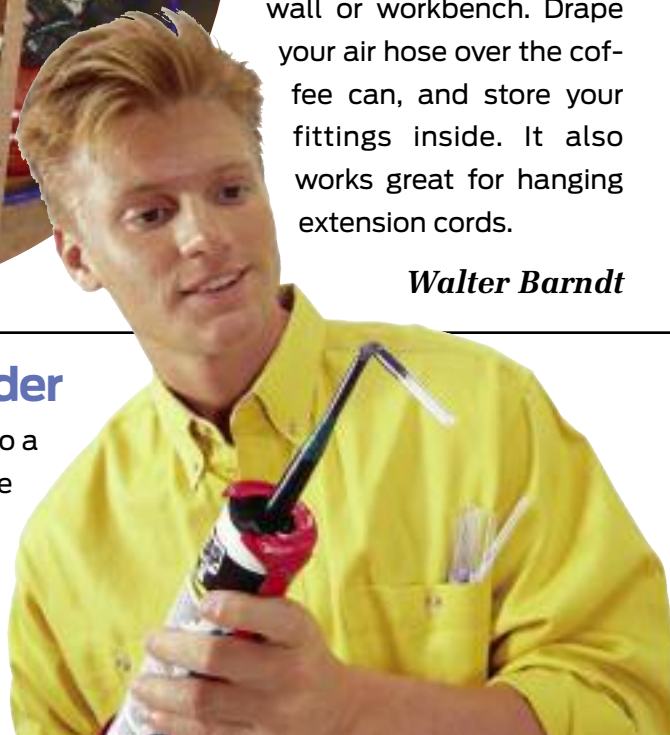
*Walter Barndt*



## 17 Caulking extender

If you have to get caulk into a tight spot, just tape a flexible drinking straw to the tip of your caulking gun and you'll be ready to caulk into any nook the straw will reach.

*Al Danas*



## 18 Chip terminator

When you're cutting off the bottom of an interior veneered door with a circular saw, it's difficult to get a clean line because the wood veneer chips very easily. Eliminate chipping by first scoring the cutting line with a sharp utility knife.

Make your saw cut 1/16 in. from the line on the waste side, and ease the edge with sandpaper. The wood will chip up to the line, but not past it.

*Anna Victoria Reich*



## 19 Hatchback protector

Have you ever tried the juggling act of loading and unloading a hatchback while keeping the hatch from banging against the metal rib of the open garage door? To protect your car's finish, glue foam pipe insulation to the metal garage door rib with rubber cement. The hatch will rest damage free against the foam.

*Rick Tatanus*





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## 20 Long-term storage

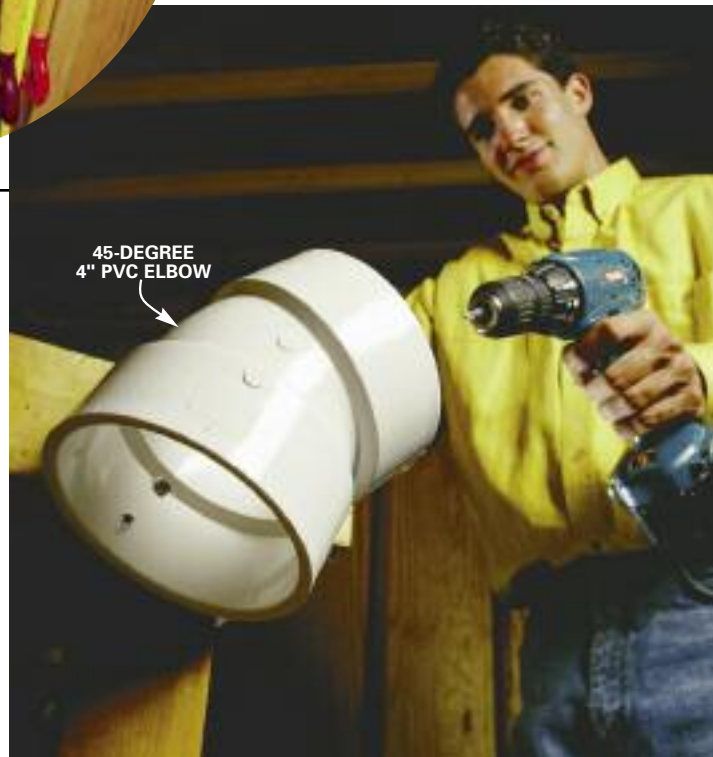
One way to get rid of clutter in your storage shed or garage is to do what we did. Screw 16-in. scrap 2x4s at a slight upward angle to each side of a wall stud. They will hold a wide variety of yard tools.

*Tina Campbell*

## 21 Cordless drill holster

Make a nifty cordless drill holster by screwing a 45-degree 4-in. PVC elbow (\$3) to the side of your workbench. Quick-draw the drill out of the holster when you're ready for action.

*Mark and Miriam*



## 22 Fishing rod catcher

Whenever I grab a fishing rod, it always catches on the line from another rod, and it's quite a headache to untangle the lines. To solve the problem, I cut an 8-ft. 1x4 in half and used 1-in. screws to mount 1-1/4-in. PVC caps (42¢ each) on one 1x4 4 in. apart. On the second 1x4, I equally spaced 1-1/4-in. PVC couplings (35¢ each). I screwed the 1x4 with the caps to the wall a foot off the floor, and the one with couplings 6 ft. off the floor and directly above it. The rod tips slide up through the couplings and the handles rest in the caps.

*Joe Jaquesmoe*





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## 23 Muffin pan parts tray

When I work on small projects or take something apart, I use muffin pans to keep everything organized. Stack several pans together for extra workspace or storage.

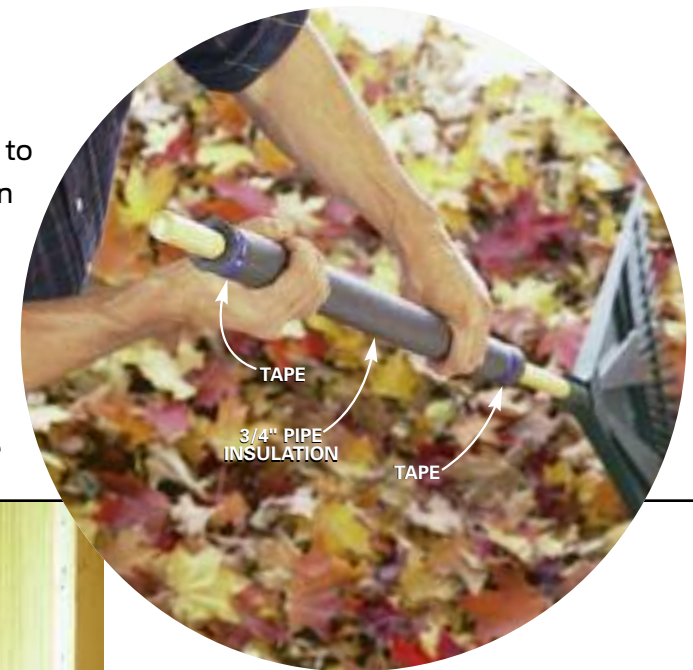
*Tom Zeman*



## 25 Padded rake holder

If you've got a lot of raking to do, tape 3/4-in. pipe insulation over the rake handle to protect your hands from blisters. Pipe insulation can also be used to soften the handles on brooms, shovels and other tools.

*Chris White*



## 24 Propane tank carrier

Whenever I took my 20-lb. propane tank to be filled, it always rolled around in the trunk of my car. To solve the problem, I stuck it in an old milk crate. The crate's wide, flat base keeps the tank stable.

*Doug Milder*



## 26 Twine dispenser

Prevent balls of twine from tangling up by making a twine dispenser from an empty plastic detergent jug. Cut the bottom off the jug and drill a hole in the cap. Screw the jug to your shop wall with the spout facing down. Drop the ball of twine into the jug, thread it through the hole and screw the cap on.

*Paul Chupek*

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## 27 Sandpaper filer

My sheets of sandpaper used to get crumpled and damaged lying around the shop. I purchased a file folder (\$4) from an office supply store, and now my sandpaper is well organized and in pristine condition.

*Aaron Zeff*



## 28 Microwave cleaner

It's easy to clean baked-on food and spills from your microwave! Partially fill a measuring or coffee cup with water and add a slice of lemon. Boil the water for a minute, and then leave the door closed and let the steam loosen the mess. After 10 minutes, open the door and wipe away the grime.

*Dorothy Gore*



## 29 Disappearing remotes

If your remote controls are cluttering up your coffee table and getting lost behind sofa cushions, here's how to neaten up. Apply adhesive-backed hook-and-loop strips to the underside of the coffee table and to the backs of the remotes. To avoid snags on upholstery and clothing, put the soft (loop) material on the remotes. Now all the controls are hidden from view, but you'll always know where to find them. Hook-and-loop strips are available for about \$7 a package at home centers and discount and hardware stores.

*Daniel Griesbach*





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## 30 Drawer stop

To keep a drawer from being pulled out, create a drawer stop with a 3-in. strip of 1/8-in. metal bar stock. Drill a 3/16-in. hole 1 in. from one end. Screw the metal strip to the back of the drawer about 1 in. from the top so it'll swing freely. Tip the strip and slide the drawer in. The heavier end of the strip hangs down and keeps the drawer from falling out.

*Thomas De Luca*



## 31 Plumber's tape tightens loose threads

The threaded leveling feet on the legs of my kitchen table fit loosely and tended to work their way out of adjustment every few weeks. So I wrapped the threads with plumber's tape and haven't had to re-adjust the feet since. Plumber's tape is meant to seal pipe threads, but this trick works on any sloppy-fitting bolts or screws.



## 32 Super-duty steel stud shelf brackets

Build two super-strong shelf brackets with a steel-framing track. Use a tin snips to cut two 41-in. lengths. Then cut V-notches 1 ft. in from both ends as shown. Screw one end of the track to the wall studs with a 10-in. 1x4 and then fold the track at the notches, bringing the ends together. Reinforce all the corners with steel framing screws. Set a shelf board on top.

**CAUTION:** Steel stud track has sharp edges. Wear gloves to protect your hands.

*Patrick M. Downey*



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## 33 Mud mixer

Powdered drywall setting compound sets up quickly, so there's no time to fool around while mixing. Chuck an old beater from a kitchen mixer into a cordless drill. It'll cut your mixing time in half and fluff up the compound like whipped cream.

*Dean Sternhagen*

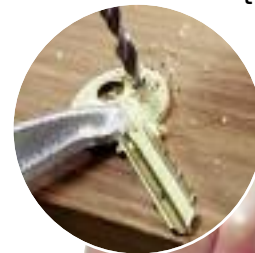
## 34 No-rattle ceiling fan

If the screws that hold the light globe to your ceiling fan tend to work loose and then hum or rattle, slip a wide rubber band around the neck of the globe where the screws grip it. The rubber band prevents the screws from loosening, dampens any noise and protects the globe from overzealous screw tighteners.



## 35 Self-selecting key

Drill a second key ring hole near the edge of your house key so it will hang at an angle and stand out from the others. No more fumbling with your key ring in the dark



trying to find the house key.



## 36 Garden gear caddy

An old golf bag—especially one on a cart—is perfect for storing and hauling garden tools. Get them all to the garden in one trip and park them in the caddy shack when you're done. Fore!

*Randy Roush*



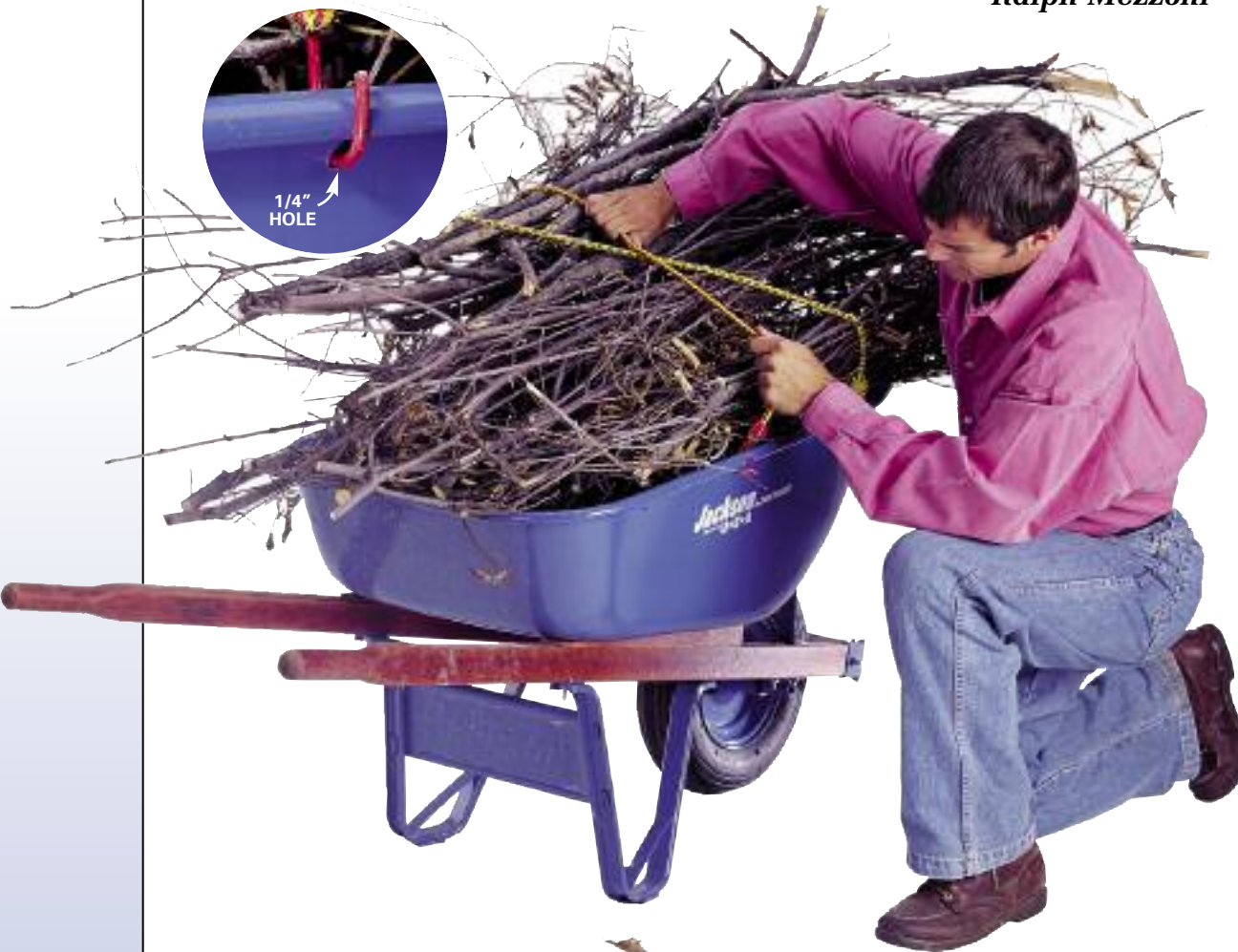


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## 37 Improved wheelbarrow

Drill 1/4-in. holes near the rim of your wheelbarrow and you can use a stretch cord to hold down bulky loads like brush or slippery loads like lumber.

*Ralph Mezzoni*



## 38 Under-sink archives

Don't file away the manuals for your kitchen and bath fixtures. Instead, slip them into a locking plastic bag and hang the bag in the cabinet under the sink. They'll always be right where you need them. Toss in paint samples and spare cabinet hardware too.



## 39 Stop sink-sprayer hang-ups

If you have to jiggle the hose as you pull out your kitchen sink sprayer, chances are the hose is catching on the shutoff valves. For smooth operation, slip 1/2-in. foam pipe insulation over the pipes and shutoff handles. Tape it if it won't stay put. Get the insulation at home centers for about \$3.

*Francis Bradley*





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## 40 Hanging a wreath on a door

To hang a wreath on a door—without leaving an ugly nail hole—drive a small screw into the top of the door, leaving the head protruding slightly. Tie a piece of fishing line to the screw, tie the other end to your wreath and then drive the screw in completely.

## 41 Tight-spot screwdriver

When you need to turn a screw in a space that's too small for a screwdriver, stick a screwdriver bit in a 1/4-in. wrench. **Bruce Clark**



## 42 His-and-hers shower shelves

If you need more than shampoo and a bar of soap in the shower, here's how to provide space for all your vital beauty potions: Get a couple of those shelves that are designed to hang from a shower arm and hang them on cabinet knobs. Use No. 8-32 hanger screws (\$1) to screw the knobs into studs or drywall anchors. **John Day**





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## 43 Accessorize your mower

If you keep a few tools handy while you mow, you can deal with stray weeds as you notice them—no need to hunt for them later. Short sections of PVC pipe taped to the mower's handle will hold tools and other necessities.

*Bruce Lyon*

## 44 Car-care file in the trunk

Keep your car's maintenance records in the car itself and you'll never have to rummage your house looking for them. Just put them in a locking plastic bag and slip them under the carpet in the trunk.



## 45 Stiffen a shower arm

Here's a quick way to make a loose shower arm stay put: Pull the escutcheon plate away from the wall. Mask around the arm and surrounding area to prevent a mess. Then shoot in a little expanding foam sealant. Use a low-expansion foam and inject just enough foam to fill in around the arm.





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## 46 Oversized twist ties

Leftover scraps of electrical cable can tie up or tie down just about anything. Twist a loop in the cable to make carrying or hanging up your bundle easier.

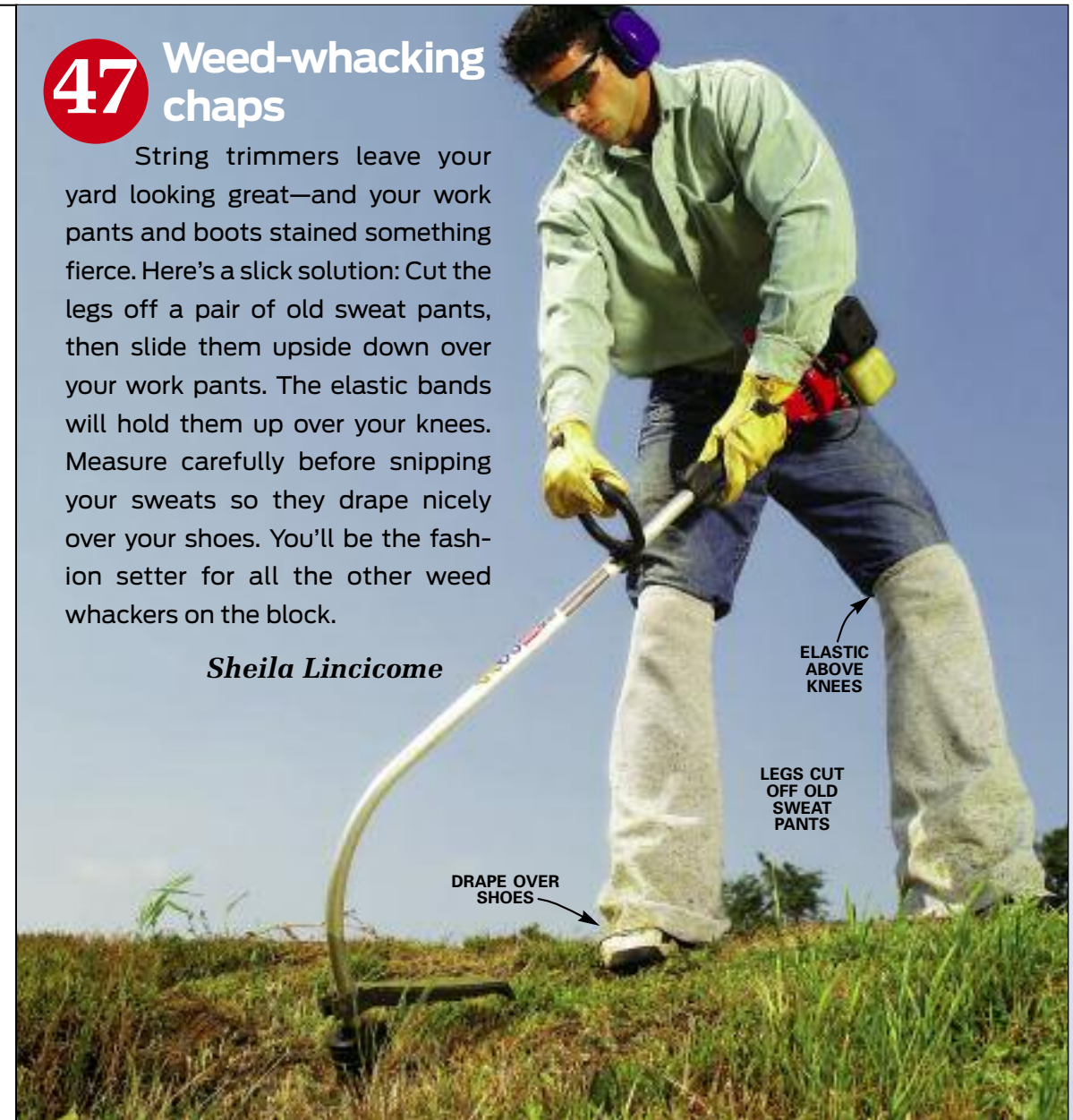
*Patrick Nagi*



## 47 Weed-whacking chaps

String trimmers leave your yard looking great—and your work pants and boots stained something fierce. Here's a slick solution: Cut the legs off a pair of old sweat pants, then slide them upside down over your work pants. The elastic bands will hold them up over your knees. Measure carefully before snipping your sweats so they drape nicely over your shoes. You'll be the fashion setter for all the other weed whackers on the block.

*Sheila Lincicome*





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## 48 Silence creaking pipes

The groaning in my basement made me think I had ghosts. Then I realized that running the hot water made my copper pipes expand and grind against pipe hangers and joists. So I picked up some adhesive-backed felt at the hardware store and cut it into strips. Then I removed each hanger and wrapped the pipe before refastening the hanger.

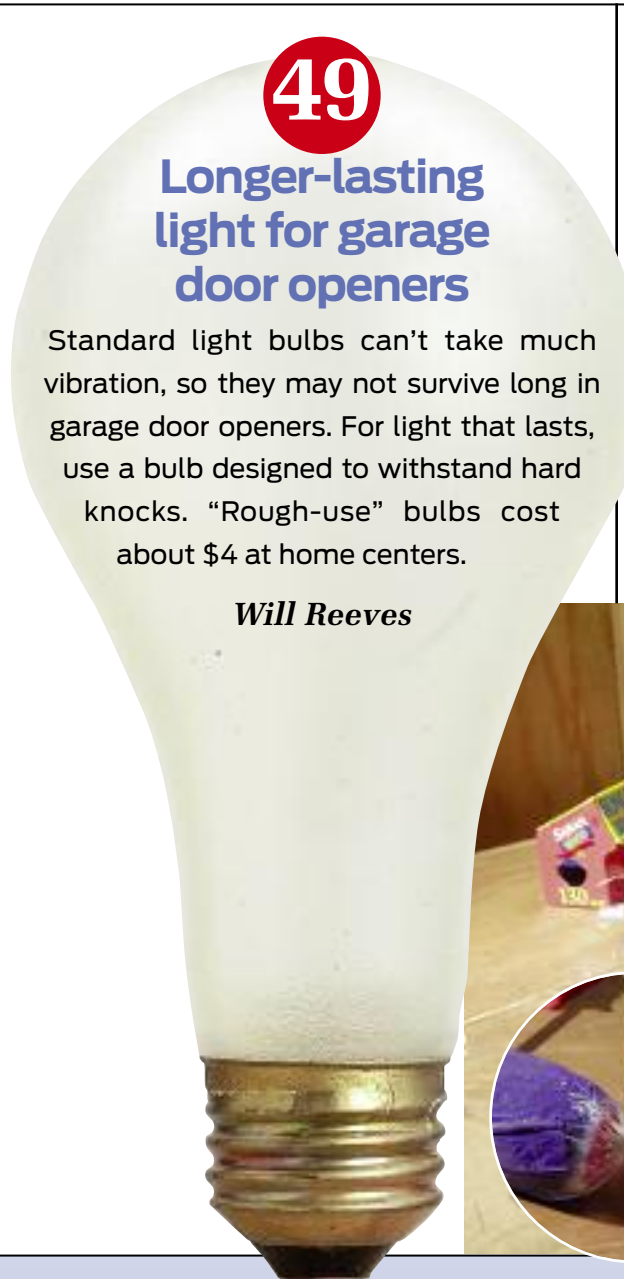


## 49

### Longer-lasting light for garage door openers

Standard light bulbs can't take much vibration, so they may not survive long in garage door openers. For light that lasts, use a bulb designed to withstand hard knocks. "Rough-use" bulbs cost about \$4 at home centers.

*Will Reeves*



## 50 Plastic-wrapped paint roller

You don't have to wash out your paint roller if you'll be using it again tomorrow. Spread a 14-in.-long strip of plastic wrap on a flat surface and push the roller over the plastic. Seal the ends with twist ties.

*Matthew Rodgers*



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## 51 Let in light and keep tools out of sight

Don't let window-peeking thieves see that your shop is full of valuable tools. Cover your windows with a few of those plastic panels made to cover lights in suspended ceilings. Get acrylic rather than styrene—it's less brittle and cuts better on a table saw. A 2 x 4-ft. piece costs about \$7 at home centers. Unlike stick-on window film, plastic panels are easy to remove if you drill holes and hang them on nails. *Allen Block*



## 53 Edge-trim your paint roller

Those ragged edges and tiny beads of dried paint on your paint roller may seem harmless, but they'll leave ugly tracks in your paint job. Trim them off, leaving a slightly tapered edge, and your roller will be as good as new.



## 54 Sanding disc storage

Like drill bits, sanding discs have an annoying habit of wandering off. To help you sort and store 4-1/2- and 5-in. discs, use a wallet-style compact disc holder.

*Dean Hallal*



## 52 High-speed hex wrench

Cut off the angled end of a hex wrench with a hacksaw and stick the straight section into your drill for faster hex-screw driving.

*Bernard Jankowski*





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## 55 Hang-it-all hooks

Those plastic hooks that plumbers use to support pipes make convenient hangers for just about anything. They're strong, cheap (25¢ to \$1 each) and come in a range of sizes. Find them in the plumbing aisle at home centers and hardware stores.



## 56 Glow-in-the-dark switch

A dab of glow-in-the-dark paint means no more groping for the light switch at night. The paint dries clear and glows for about eight hours after exposure to light. Get it at a paint or craft store for about \$5.

## 57 Easy tool cleanup

Wrap your putty knife or trowel with duct tape when you're mixing grout, thin-set or anything else that hardens. It makes cleanup a breeze. Tear off the tape before the compound gets crusty. A little WD-40 will clean away any adhesive residue.

*Perry Barnhart*



## 58 Stop losing socks

Stuff a strip of foam pipe insulation into the space between your washer and your dryer or along the wall. That way, socks can't slip into the abyss.

*J. Michael Wright*

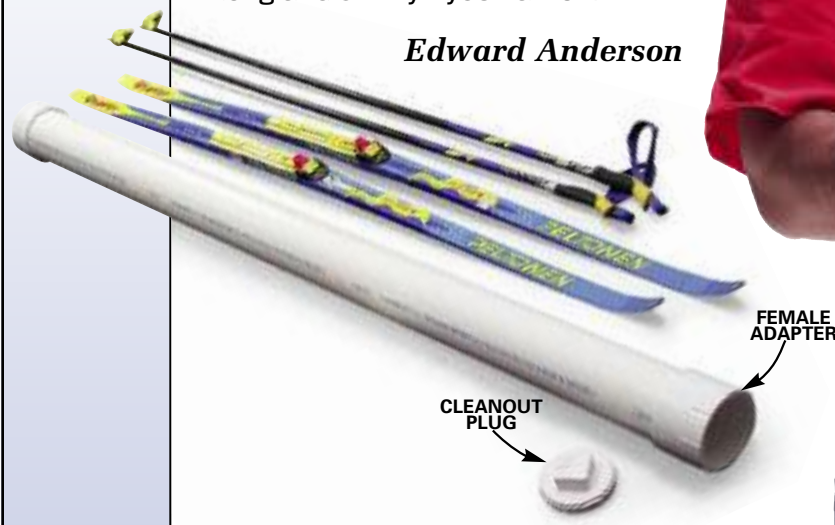


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## 59 Cheap storage cylinders

Build cheap storage cylinders from PVC pipe, end caps, female adapters and cleanout plugs. Parts are available in an assortment of diameters at any hardware store or home center. Cut the pipe to length with a handsaw or chop saw. Glue an end cap to one end and a female adapter to the other pipe end with PVC cement. Twist in a threaded cleanout plug for a cap. If sealing isn't important, you can drill holes in the pipe to decrease the cylinder's weight. Use the cylinders to store and protect fishing rods, drill bits, cross-country skis, blueprints or anything long and skinny—you name it.

*Edward Anderson*



## 60 Renew a knife blade

Utility knife blades often dull near the tip long before the rest of the blade loses its edge. To get more mileage out of a blade, put on a pair of safety glasses and snap off the tip with pliers. Presto! You've got a new sharp tip.

*Carl Hines*



## 61 Secret code for combination locks

If you have trouble remembering your lock combination, try this: Pick a secret number and add it to each of the combination numbers. Mark the resulting higher numbers on the lock itself with a label or rotary tool. When you need to open the lock, subtract your secret number from each number to determine the combination.

*Rick Brandau*





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## 62 Under-joist shelf



Create extra storage space by screwing wire closet shelving to joists in your garage or basement. Wire shelving is see-through, so you can easily tell what's up there. Depending on the width, wire shelves cost from \$1 to \$3 per foot at home centers.

*David Cotner*

## 63 Slam stopper

If your doors tend to slam or rattle, here's how to quiet them: Stick cabinet door bumpers to the door stop. Place the bumper wherever the door first contacts the door stop molding. A pack of bumpers costs about \$2 at home centers.

*Jeff Girard*



## 64 Rapid inflation

On many shop vacuums, you can plug the hose into the exhaust port. And that lets you turn your vacuum into a power inflator for toys and air mattresses. A small transmission funnel (\$5 at hardware and auto parts stores) makes a perfect nozzle.

*Marty Comisky*





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## 65 Hardware store helper

A digital camera helps you get the right thingamajig at the hardware store. Snap a few pictures and take the camera shopping with you. It's faster than making a list, and the camera is more reliable than your memory.

*Tony Medley*

## 66 Dust catcher

Minimize the mess when you're cutting or drilling a hole in dry-wall. Tape a bag below the work zone to catch the dust. Use an easy-release tape to avoid wall damage.

*Stuart Balderson*



## 67 Downspout blowout

Here's a way to unplug a downspout without climbing a ladder: Wait a day or two after rain to let all the water seep past the clog and out of the downspout. Then blast out the clog with your leaf blower.

Be prepared for a mucky shower of gutter sludge. If you have an electric leaf blower, don't use this trick unless you're sure that all the water has drained out of the downspout, and always use a GFCI-protected outlet.

*Jim Burke*



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## 68 Soaker bucket

When it comes to watering, slower is better because water soaks in rather than runs off the soil. Slow watering usually means running your garden hose at a trickle or using a soaker hose. Here's a way to soak the soil without dragging hoses around: Drill four 1/8-in. holes in the bottom of a bucket and set it next to thirsty plants.

*David Korte*

## 69 Easy-up masking tape

End frustration when finding the end of your masking tape. Fold the tape's loose end back on itself at a 45-degree angle so the end of the tape can't stick to the roll. Now you have a triangular tab to pull without prying at the roll with your fingernail.

*Jerry Maddy*

TWIST OVER  
AT 45 DEGREES  
FOR EASY-GRAB TAB



## 70 Taped-up caulk tubes

Here's a slick tip to keep partially used caulk tubes well sealed and at hand. Fold a piece of duct tape over the open tube to seal it, leaving a few inches of extra tape. Poke a hole through the tape and hang the tube on pegboard.



## 71 Cord organizer

Elastic cords can quickly become a tangled mess. Find the one you need at a glance with this handy rack made from 3- or 4-in. PVC pipe. Just drill 1/2-in.-diameter holes in the pipe to match the slightly stretched lengths of your cords. Keep it in your trunk or shop, out of the reach of children.





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## 72 Drain vacuum

When a hard object like a toothbrush, comb or toy plugs a toilet or drain, a plunger may not be the solution—it might only push the obstruction in deeper. Instead, suck out the water and the obstruction with a wet/dry shop vacuum. You'll feel like Superman!

*Mark Serkanic*



## 73 Trunk bumpers

Keep a couple of sections of 3/4-in. pipe insulation in your trunk to protect both the car's paint and your oversized cargo. A package of pipe insulation costs about \$4 at home centers and hardware stores.

*Leroy Dahl*



## 74 Preserve picture holes

A fresh coat of paint can fill in and hide small nail holes. So if you plan to hang pictures in their same locations when the job is done, stick toothpicks into the nail holes. Leave the toothpicks protruding about 1/8 in. so you can roll right over them. After painting, you can pull out the toothpicks and then put nails and pictures exactly where they were.

*Jim Christensen*





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## 75 Garden tool hideaway

A mailbox near your garden provides a convenient home for tools. A small mailbox like this one costs less than \$10 at hardware stores and home centers. King-size models cost about \$25.

*Lynn Samples*

## 76 Quick blade cover-up

From our “oldie but goodie” collection: Recycle old garden hose by slitting open a length and using it as a blade cover for sharp saws and other tools.

*Thomas Cook*



## 77

### No-mess epoxy mixer



For quick, thorough mixing of two-part epoxy, put the components into a plastic bag and knead them together with your fingers. Punch a small hole in the bag to make a neat dispenser.

## 78 Wet the brush before you paint

To minimize crusty paint buildup on bristles and make brush cleaning easier, dip your brush in water and shake out the excess before you paint with latex paint. If you're using an oil-based finish, dip the brush in mineral spirits. In hot, dry weather, dip the brush occasionally during painting.

*Edwin Judd*





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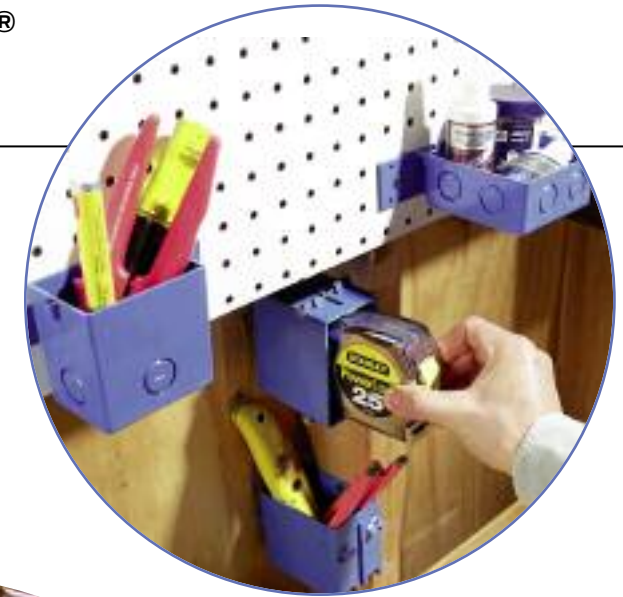
## 79 Paint tray liner

Glad Press'n Seal plastic wrap (\$5 at discount stores) is meant to seal food containers. But it also makes a great paint tray liner. When you're done painting, just peel the sticky plastic off the tray and throw it away—no paint-caked tray to clean up.

*Deanna Heath*

## 80 Electrical box tool holders

Junction boxes can hold a lot more than switches and wiring. Nail or screw them wherever you need handy holders for small stuff. They come in different sizes and shapes and cost 50¢ to \$2 each.



## 81 Fresh tape

Sometimes, masking tape that's been sitting on a shelf for years won't pull off the roll without tearing. Freshen it by micro-waving it for 10 seconds. Heat softens the adhesive for easy release.

*Bruce Hall*



# 101 Handy Hints®



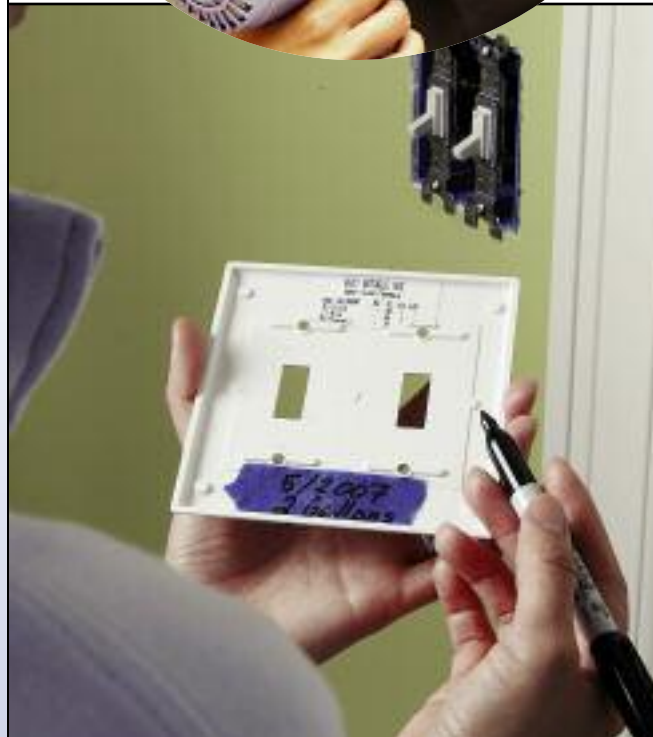
## 82 Bumper sticker release

Heat from a hair dryer softens adhesive, making bumper stickers, price tags and other labels easy to pull off. Start at one corner and pull slowly, allowing the heat to loosen the sticker.

## 84 Keep pictures level

A pinch of mounting putty (the sticky stuff used to hang posters) keeps pictures level without damaging walls.

*Michael A. King*



## 83 Painter's reminder

When you're finishing a painting project, write on a piece of masking tape the date and how many gallons of paint were needed for the job. Stick the tape to the back of the light switch plate. To get the exact shade next time, also include the color formula sticker peeled off the paint can. When the room's due for a fresh coat, you'll be ready to go.

*John Paulis*

## 85 Unclog a nozzle

When a spray nozzle is clogged—or partially clogged, so the paint just sputters out—soak it in a jar of acetone or nail polish remover. Use a glass jar, since these strong solvents will destroy some types of plastic. Cap the jar and let the solvent work for a few hours.

*Chris Hinckley*





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## 86 Shoe pocket

Hanging shoe bags are great for closets, but they can also cut the clutter in your garage, workshop or laundry room. A shoe bag like this one costs about \$12 at discount stores.

*Lori Steiner*

## 87 Countertop gap filler

If crumbs, papers or even flatware falls into the gap between your countertop and refrigerator, fill the void with nearly invisible plastic tubing. Clear tubing is available at home centers in several widths starting at 1/8 in.

*Sara Finley*



## 88 Easy watering

Stop dragging your garden hose all over the yard by attaching it to your fence with conduit straps (available in the electrical section of home centers). Then just hook up the hose at the spigot end, whatever sprinkler you want at the other end, and open the valve. It will make watering “the back 40” an easy task.

*Jim Gish*



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## 89 Under-cabinet cleanup

When the floor of your sink cabinet needs a spruce-up, lay down squares of self-adhesive vinyl tile. They're about a buck a square at home centers and provide an easy-to-wipe-clean surface. *Melanie Ternes*

## 90 Double duty shelf brackets

Shelf brackets designed to support clothes hanger rods aren't just for closets. The rod-holding hook on these brackets comes in handy in the garage and workshop too. You can bend the hook to suit long tools or cords. Closet brackets cost about \$3 each at home centers and hardware stores. *Kyle Schroeder*



## 91 Locate sprinkler lines

Before you dig, find your underground sprinkler lines to avoid damaging them. Feed fish tape through an open sprinkler head and locate the line with a metal detector (\$20 to \$45 for rental). *Dan Rios*





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## 92 Drill bit guide

Drill bits can wander when you're starting a hole on a hard, glossy surface like tile. Choose a washer slightly larger than the head of your drill bit and align the washer opening over your starting point. Tape the entire washer to the tile and you'll have a steady guide.

*Adam Halverson*



## 94 Trunk organizer

Make an inexpensive trunk organizer with file crates or plastic bins. Use self-adhesive hook-and-loop tape (like Velcro) to secure the bin to the fabric lining of your trunk. Now you have a great place to store car items and haul bags of groceries without them toppling over.

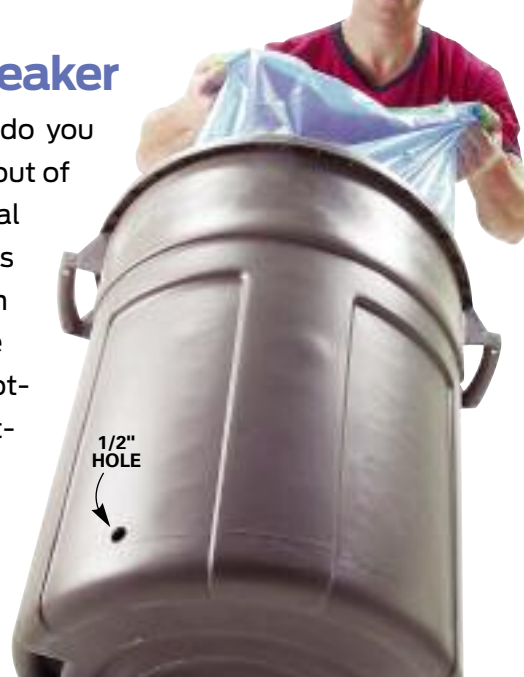
*Cynthia Murphy*



## 93 Trash can vacuum breaker

Nature abhors a vacuum. And so do you when you try to pull a full plastic bag out of a trash can. The bag forms an airtight seal inside the container, creating a vacuum as you try to lift out the bag. Break the vacuum and save your back by drilling a 1/2-in. hole in the can. Drill through the side, near the bottom of the can. If you drill through the bottom, disgusting garbage liquids can leak out.

*Dan Lund*



## 95 Tarp trailer

With a big plastic tarp, you can easily drag leaves, branches or mulch around your yard to wherever you need it. A 9 x 12-ft. tarp costs about \$8 at home centers and hardware stores.

*Daniel Rodman*





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## 96 Stadium-seating bookshelf

Cut a hollow PVC fence post (\$8 at home centers) to the length of your bookshelf and push it to the back of the shelf. This creates a second tier for paperback storage, doubling the number of books you can put on display. *Kam Wadkins*

## 97 Keep rim rust out of paint

You can get a clean pour out of an old paint can that has rust debris in its rim. Just wrap the rim with tape to seal in the debris while you pour.



## 98 Spray-clean roller

Spin most of the excess paint off your roller sleeve by holding the roller frame inside a bucket and hitting it with a nozzled garden hose. In seconds it'll be nearly paint free. You'll still have to use soap and water to finish, but this'll give you a huge head start.

*Decie C. McKnight*



## 99 Pipe orienteering

When trying to locate a pipe under the floor, attach a rare earth (neodymium) magnet to an electrical fish tape and feed it into drain lines through the cleanout plug. Locate the magnet (and the pipe) under the floor using an ordinary compass, which will turn wildly when it finds the strong magnet.

*Lee Cordrey*



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## 100 Bike rack

Closet pole and shelf brackets can keep your bikes up and out of the way of car doors and bumpers. Just screw the brackets to the wall studs. Line the pole carriage with self-stick hook-and-loop strips so it won't scratch your bike frame.



## 101 Streak-free car

Your car will look like it rolled out of a professional car wash when you dry it with your leaf blower. Blow away the bulk of the water with the leaf blower and then finish up with a quick towel swipe. You'll get a streak-free finish without a pile of wet towels or waiting around to start waxing.

*Greg Brennfleck*