

Truss Security

by Clayton DeKorne



A simple tool that braces and spaces roof trusses has been designed by a contractor who recognized that safety and accuracy have long been needed in roof truss construction. The *Trusslock Spacing Tool* can be quickly clamped onto each truss as it is set in place to provide lateral support and automatic spacing. No nailing is required, so the tool removes quickly when roof sheathing is applied. The reusable, galvanized-steel tool is available for 16- to 24-inch centers in 8-, 12, and 16-foot lengths. Successive tools interconnect to maintain precise layout even on large jobs. It is reportedly accurate to within 1/8-inch in 100 feet. For more information, contact Mike Jarvis, Truslock, Inc., P.O. Box 135, Calvert City, KY 42029; 800/334-9689.

Woman's Work Gloves



Strong gloves for strong women are now made to fit the smaller, narrow size of a woman's hand. Womanswork gloves are made to fit like a dress glove and yet withstand the rigors of heavy construction and carpentry work. Two models are available: one, made entirely of suede pigskin and another, made with a split cowhide

The Journal's pick of curious, interesting and useful products.

palm for greater durability. Each model can be obtained with or without an insulative liner. For more information contact Womanswork, P.O. Box 2547, Kennebunkport, ME 04046; 207/967-8800.

Structural Shims



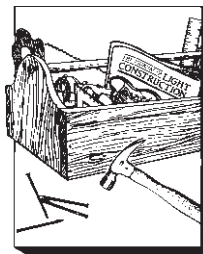
Durable plastic shims do not rot. Grove Products, Inc. produces both continuous dimensioned and tapered shims made of a dense, ABS plastic that can withstand compression tests of up to 20,000 pounds. Several types of Grove's Structural Shims are available. These include U-shaped shims made to fit around anchor bolts, breakaway strips with indentations to prevent stacked shims from slipping, and continuous or stepped wedges. Each type is color coded for thickness. For more information, contact Grove Products, Inc., P.O. Box 240, Leominster, MA 01453; 508/534-5188.

Pole Barn Ingenuity



Tip up steel rafters without a crane using the hinged column anchors in Socket Set Building Systems. The steel "socket set" is made of two parts: a base plate to be embedded in concrete and a square post end to be attached to either a wood or steel column. Lugs fit into each part to form a hinge that allows frames to be tipped up into place. Moreover the assembly remains in place as a permanent anchor to keep column ends set above the concrete base. The manufacturer warrants the building's columns from rot for the lifetime of the original purchaser, whether they are made of treated wood or not. Socket Systems supplies a building "kit" that includes all the steel components of the structure — such as the socket sets, bolts,

TOOL BOX



The TD-162 — surprisingly light and maneuverable.

Self-feeding screw-gun speeds production work. What pneumatic nailers have done for driving nails, the Duofast TD-162 hopes to do for driving screws. The TC-162 is a self-feeding screwdriver designed for production fastening of drywall, and plywood sheathing and decking. Its one-handed operation lets you avoid the struggle to put a screw on the tip of a screwgun while holding a sheet of drywall.

The machine can greatly decrease production time for screwing down plywood decking and drywall. But, like any specialty tool, the TD-162 has its limitations. The tool is designed to deliver a lot of screws one after the other. If one of those screws is misaligned or improperly driven, however, you must go back and use a screwgun to correct it. The TD-162 probably won't replace your screwgun, but it could change your approach to some fastening jobs.

The self-feeding screwdriver is made up of a screw-feeding mechanism with a cartridge to hold a coil of screws. The mechanism is attached to the chuck end of a conventional electric or pneumatic screwdriver. Duofast uses four different drive units manufactured by other companies. Black and Decker and AEG provide electric, pistol-grip drivers and Sioux makes both an electric and a pneumatic angled-chuck driver. I ordered the Sioux electric because I have a particular fondness for the Sioux angled-chuck drill. Its compact proportions make it ideal for getting into tight places.

Duofast offers both fine- and coarse-thread bugle-head screws in 1-, 1 1/8-, and 1 5/8-inch lengths for use with the tool. The coils are color coded for length and sold in boxes of 45 coils each. A coil of 150 1 5/8-inch screws costs \$2.15 — compared to about \$1.75 for an equal number of loose screws (New England prices).

Performance: To test the TD-162 Sioux, I took it on a renovation project to fasten up 240 square feet of drywall on a ceiling and to secure the subfloor beneath this. Its performance was mixed.

The screwdriver proved to be surprisingly easy to maneuver despite an unwieldy coil of screws hanging around its neck like a goiter. It is well-balanced and not as chuck-heavy as the pistol grip models.

For tacking up drywall on a ceiling, its one-handed operation was a treat. Compared to using a 4,500 rpm screwgun, we were able to save almost five minutes on each 4x12 sheet (of course, the time savings would be less for professional "rockers"). However, this did not include the time needed for going back over the ceiling with another screwgun to sink in improperly driven screws. There were a fair number of these for several reasons. First, it took us awhile to get used to the tool's cycle of operation — the time it takes to drive a screw and advance. Also, it took a lot of push to drive the screws over our heads. (The tool is designed primarily for modular wall construction where every unit is laid out horizontally and a worker can put his full weight behind the tool.)

And finally, in the scuffle on the job site, the coils of screws got kicked around, dislodging some screws in each coil and knocking them out of line. This caused them to misfeed and even to jam the feed mechanism. While this could be avoided, it points out that the tool is fragile when loaded and requires special precautions in handling it. The tool won't fit in a tool pouch without damaging a coil, for instance, so you have to make an effort to keep it nearby. This can be difficult in the typically crowded job site.

Screwing down the subfloor proved easier since we could bear down on the tool. And, because the sheets were precut and laid out all at once, we weren't setting the tool down. Finding an optimum rhythm for operating the tool was easier. It was also possible to toe screws in along the edge, a task a conventional screwgun can't accomplish without an extension bit.

Duofast is presently working on manufacturing its own drive unit. This will reportedly be a pistol grip model with a second handle to steady the tool when using it. Hopefully, Duofast will continue to make available the Sioux model which, I think, is a versatile size for general renovation. Perhaps the next generation of the TD-162 will also have a clip so the tool can be hung off a tool belt and a box to store it in — two items that would be greatly appreciated.

Duofast is on the right track with this innovative new machine. It is clearly a powerful tool for modular house production. With a few refinements it could serve equally well for general construction work. And with a list price of \$270.00, it can probably earn its keep on many jobsites just as it is. ■

steel rafter frames, and steel columns (if desired) – and blueprints. Other materials – wood columns, bracing, siding, and roofing materials are needed. For more information contact Socket Systems, Inc., 550 North Street, Meadville, PA 16335; 814/333-1717.

Hip Fit



A padded tool belt is contoured to reduce back strain. The LightenUp tool belt is designed to reduce blood flow restrictions, which can be a major source of back fatigue for those who keep their tools on their hips. The wide pad and conical shape of the belt evenly distributes weight and allows it to be worn loosely without slipping down. It is made of a strong, lightweight, Cordura nylon with a quick release fastener. The LightenUp belt can be matched with the tool pouches you already own or a full-line of Cordura tool pouches are available with it. For more information, contact Lumark Industrial Products Corporation, PO Box 6262, Parsippany, NJ 07054; 800/544-5297.

Polyethylene Perimeter



Site fencing is made quick and easy. Fencelt, a high-density polyethylene screen, can be used for perimeter fencing around construction sites. The plastic-knitted fabric is reported to be very resistant to wear and tear. Fencelt can be easily attached to metal t-posts with tie-wraps. It is available in 46-inch widths in red, orange, blue, green or black. For more information contact Windscreens West, Inc., 8200 E. Pacific Place, Suite 108, Denver, CO 80231; 303/368-8600.