

Letters



Donuts Not the Answer

To the Editor:

I was very glad to see Gregory Smith's article (1/89, p. 39) on blood sugar levels and job safety. The article bears out our personal research and experience in this area. Getting enough rest and maintaining a consistent level of blood sugar will insure the best possible performance in any area.

His suggestions on how to do this, however, contain a major but common enough mistake. He suggests that coffee and sugary snacks are "high in energy" and will help you to maintain an even blood sugar level. This is not correct!

Sugary snacks and coffee get into the blood stream very quickly. This indeed creates a burst of energy. Unfortunately the sense of well-being from this sugar "rush" is short-lived and frequently followed by a drop in the blood sugar to a level that is even lower than it was before the sugar was ingested. At this point a craving for more sugar occurs and a cycle of dips and lows in the blood sugar is set in motion. This is an unhealthy situation.

Smith's suggestions for breaks at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and consistently breaking for lunch are excellent. Instead of empty calories in the form of donuts and cake at the breaks, try a nutritious, high protein snack like nuts, cheese, whole grain crackers and peanut butter, or celery sticks stuffed with cream cheese. Have containers of unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice on hand. The body processes the natural sugars in fruit juice more evenly than highly processed white sugar. Protein is broken down slowly and enters the blood stream slowly over a long period of time. Having several protein snacks over the course of the day will do more than anything else to maintain an even level of blood sugar and stave off physical and mental fatigue.

My husband is a contractor. In addition to the above, he has established the custom of going out to breakfast with his crew. It's a good time to plan out the day and give instructions. And even if the breakfast is just eggs on a roll eaten in the van on the way to a job site, it's a nutritionally sound way to begin the day and insures that blood sugar levels will be up for the early part of the day and easy to maintain throughout.

Claudia Chapman
The Carpenter Cooperative
Danbury, Conn.

Rolled Corner Bead Suggested

To the Editor:

I found Clayton DeKorne's article

(12/88, p. 18) on building curved walls informative and thorough. As a remodeler and one-time cabinetmaker, I would like to add a little information to Mr. DeKorne's excellent overview.

First, bending corner bead around arched doorways and window openings can be a real headache. I recommend using rolled corner bead instead. This product resembles paper drywall tape with two strips of metal running down its center. There is a 1/8-inch gap between the strips of metal, allowing the material to be easily bent around a corner. The advantage of this product for arches is that when you cut one of the strips to curve it around the arch, the other strip, since it is independent of the one you've cut, flexes easily and smoothly around the curve. This is unlike the metal corner bead, which tends to fight you every inch of the way, due to being solid metal with a formed corner. Rolled corner bead is sold in 100-foot rolls around these parts, and goes for about \$12.00 a roll.

The second point I'd like to make concerns capping plywood baseboard with solid-wood base molding. While Mr. DeKorne is quite correct in stating that nailing into plywood edge isn't very secure, his assertion that glue will "go a long way" in holding the two together seems doubtful. My experience tells me that edge-grain plywood is almost useless as a glue-joint surface. In fact, I question that wisdom of securing the base molding to the plywood at all, as the two materials have very different reactions to variations in humidity and temperature, and the best bet seems to be nailing the base molding to the studs only. This lets it "float" on the plywood to allow for differences in expansion and contraction, much like a floating panel in a door. Aside from these two areas, I've found my experiences with curved structures to be very similar to Mr. DeKorne's.

Jeffrey Kalmar
Ridgewood, N.J.

Dead Air Space: How Big?

To the Editor:

Referring to the article about the new "Barrier" wall system in your Miscellany column (8/88, pg. 10) and the letter to the editor (12/88, pg. 5), Mr. David Briton of Ludlow, Vt. is quite correct in questioning the presence of a 1 5/8-inch "dead air space" in a wall.

I speak as a former engineering and physics instructor and any dead-air space greater than 3/4 inch in a wall is subject to increasingly significant heat transfer or loss due to convective loops. This is independent of protec-

tion from infiltration. The only possible exception would be for minimal temperature differentials between surfaces. No mention was made of this latter possibility.

The presence of reflective foil surfaces would have no bearing on conductive-convective heat exchange -- only radiation heat exchange.

Irwin L. Goodchild, Jr.
Shelburne, Mass.

How about IBM?

To the Editor:

Is there a law that says a construction company must use a Macintosh? That is the impression I get when I read JLC.

I own a wonderful IBM clone and I am very happy with it. I've been hunting for a good construction estimator that will not cost me thousands of dollars, and I would surely love to have your opinion on the various programs out there.

Come on fellows...we need an article written for those of us in the IBM

environment to help guide us through the thicket.

Many thanks.

Gary Nair
HouseCraft
Summit, N.J.

Perhaps you didn't see our July 1987 edition which had a number of articles devoted to IBM-type computers and programs. We don't always have an apple in our eye. In fact, we own and enjoy IBM clones, and plan further reviews of IBM software in the future. -Editor



Keep 'em coming... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to *The Journal*, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477

Editorial

Class, Not Gloss

We receive a steady stream of mail telling us that you like us just the way we are. Frequent comments are: "JLC is just what I've been looking for" and "Whatever you do, please don't become another gloss trade mag."

So we hope you're not alarmed when you see a few small but significant changes in the magazine next month. On the cover, those of you in the Northeast will find the words "New England Edition" printed under the logo. Those of you in the Mid-Atlantic and southeastern states will find the words "Eastern Edition." Readers in the Midwest and western states will get separate issues as well. You'll also see a few new names on the masthead - the names of new staff hired to make the regional editions possible.

Although these changes are noted by only a few words, they are significant because they mark the beginning of a new era for us. Now we'll be publishing four magazines rather than one.

For us this means a growing staff and new challenges for the business. For you it will mean better

information each month that is more specifically targeted to the kind of building and remodeling you do in your part of the country. For example, readers in California won't have to read about building on permafrost, and readers in New England will be spared the details of how to hang a radiant barrier in Florida attics.

Other than that, little will change. As for the persistent request that we don't become glossy, don't worry. If by "glossy" you mean slick and superficial, we probably couldn't write that way if we tried. And we have no interest in trying.

We plan instead to go on putting out the same honest, practical information that you consistently tell us you want - only maybe we'll do it just a little bit better now.

Finally, thanks for all your letters of appreciation and encouragement (and even some occasional criticism). It makes all our efforts seem worthwhile and it helps us muster the energy each month to put out the next issue.

-Editor