

Products

by Leland Stone

Locknut Wrench

If you've been using a screwdriver to torque down locknuts in electrical boxes, check out this *Locknut Tool*. It's a special wrench with interchangeable heads that cradle half the locknut, making slippage nearly impossible. The offset design makes it easy to position inside a box, even when the wiring is already in place. The 6-inch handle not only provides enough leverage to install new locknuts, but it will remove stubborn old ones, too. A single wrench costs \$20.52; a handle plus six sizes of heads costs \$143.64.

Contact: Takas Tool Company, Inc., 1 Parker Square, Suite 333, Wichita Falls, TX 76308; 888/896-1922.



Tubular Mud

The common punchlist chore of patching nail pops could be made easier with *Lightweight Touch-Up Compound*. Contractor input helped spec this vinyl-based drywall compound, which is packed in standard, 10¹/₂-ounce caulking tubes. Load the tube into your caulking gun, cut the tip at an angle, and squeeze out a bead of mud. Small repairs should be allowed to dry for 24 hours; for larger jobs, use two applications. *Lightweight Touch-Up Compound* costs about \$1.79 per tube.

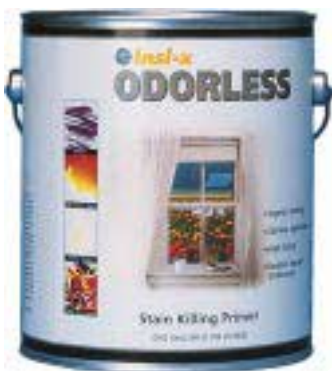
Contact: United States Gypsum Company, 125 S. Franklin St., Chicago, IL 60680-4134; 800/621-9622.



Unscented Stain Sealer

Spray shellac primer keeps knots from bleeding through a new paint job, but your clients might complain about the ripe odor. To keep noxious fumes under control when you're painting, try *Odorless* primer. Like shellac, this primer can be applied with a brush, roller, or spray, and is said to bond to a variety of surfaces and give good stain coverage, but without the lingering solvent smell. Touch-dry time is 30 minutes, but wait two hours before applying the next coat. Sold in quart and gallon sizes, you'll pay about \$21 for a gallon of *Odorless* primer.

Contact: Insl-x Products Corporation, 50 Holt Dr., Stony Point, NY 10980; 800/225-5554.



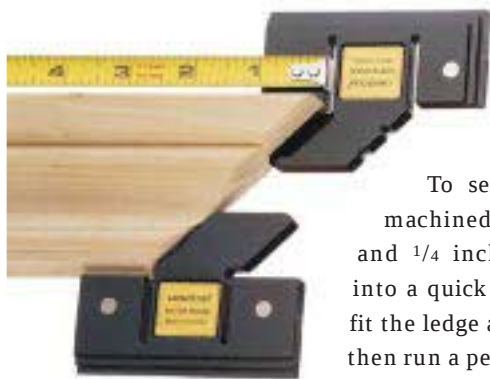
Sheets of Brick

To get the look of brick without the price tag, check out *Quick Brick Wall Panels*. These panels are made from thin cuts of real brick bonded to 16x48-inch cement board, creating 7/8-inch-thick panels that carry a Class A fire rating. Unlike traditional brick veneers, these 35-pound panels are installed using galvanized screws driven through the cement board into the sheathing or framing; mortar joints are later tuck-pointed using a grout bag. Windows and doors can be trimmed out with J-channel, and corner bricks are available for wall ends. You don't need a bricklayer to do the job, either – most carpenters can install this product with ordinary tools. The panels cost about \$4.30 per square foot.

Contact: Surebond, Inc., 500 E. Remington Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173; 847/843-1818.

Easy Miters

It's easy to hook a tape over the points of mitered casings to measure the long dimension, but good luck measuring between short points. With the *Miter Hook*, you won't need any luck. This tough little plastic tool slips over the miter's point, providing a wide slot for your tape to grab on to; you can flip the hook around to measure the inside length of the miter (steel pins in the hook secure it to the stock). While



you're measuring, magnets embedded in the hook lock the tape measure in position.

To set the reveal, two machined ledges, at $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, turn the hook into a quick marking gauge — fit the ledge against your stock, then run a pencil along the outside edge of the hook. The miter hook costs \$6.95.

Contact: Lee Valley Tools Inc., 1090 Morrison Dr., Ottawa, ON K2H 8K7 Canada; 613/596-0350.

Dual Tool

Many lightweight air compressors do a good job of delivering pressure, but the *Duoflex HC125* offers volume, too. With reported air delivery rates of 6.3 cfm to 8.1 cfm at up to 90 psi, the Duoflex is said to be ideal for running air tools or spraying drywall texture. Its motor doesn't use lubricating oil (which eliminates one job-site maintenance task), and an automatic switch shuts the motor down when it's not in use.

Weighing in at 65 pounds, this compressor is mounted on a wheeled cart with a folding handle, making the whole rig truly portable. The average retail price of the Duoflex is \$650.



Contact: Marshalltown Trowel Company, P.O. Box 738, Marshalltown, IA 50158; 515/753-5999.



Sneaky Deck Hardware

Outdoor decks are built with expensive materials and careful workmanship — two very good arguments against face-nailing deck boards. *Dekfast* is an imported fastener that offers a visual and structural alternative to unsightly face nails. There are two prongs on each clip, one of which is driven into the edge of the previous plank before nailing the clip to the joist. The next board is jammed onto the protruding second prong, and the process continues across the deck. You'll still need to use screws to fasten the first and last boards, but you can clip the prongs off a spare Dekfast and use it as a spacer to raise these planks flush with the others. A clip should be used at every joist, which means you'll need around 200 for a 100-square-foot deck. You can only get Dekfast clips from the distributor in buckets of 500 for \$125.

Contact: Dekfast, USA Inc., 1932-B Voorhees Ave. Redondo Beach, CA 90278-2327; 888/335-3217.

