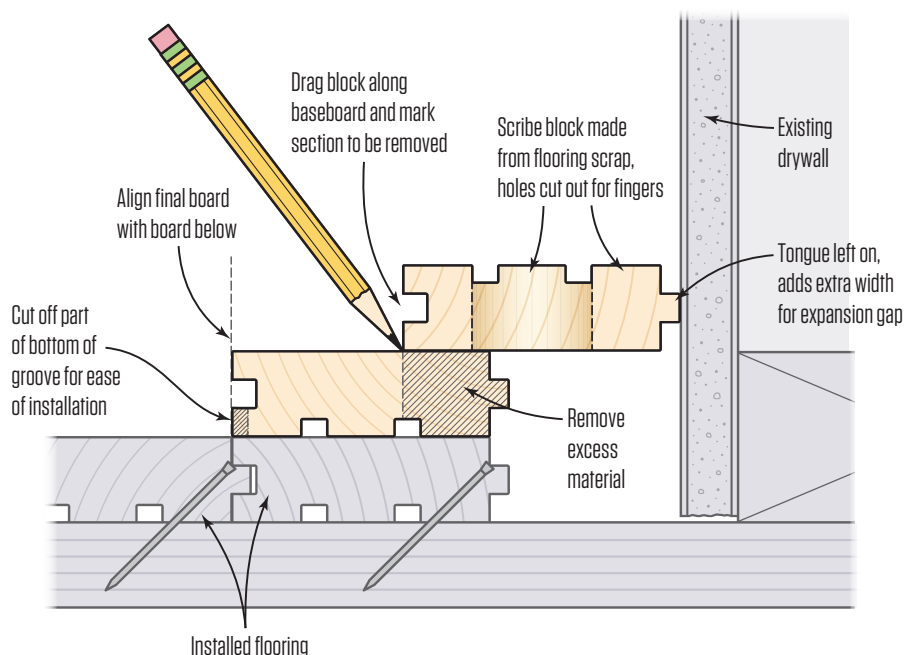


Q Can you provide more detail about how to scribe the final board on a strip floor?

A Roe Osborn, senior editor at *JLC*, responds: In “Installing Strip Flooring” (*Training the Trades*, Jul/18), the final photo shows a scribing block made by Howard Brickman, a wood-flooring specialist. The block is simply a scrap of the flooring being installed (in this case, 2 1/4-inch-wide oak), with finger holes drilled in it for holding it during the scribe. The block is



Scribing the Final Board



A scrap of flooring with two finger holes makes a convenient scribe block, as shown in the photo above. The trick is using the same material for the block as the flooring that is being installed, in this case 2 1/4-inch-wide oak boards. The board being scribed should sit directly on top of the next-to-last board, with the edge of the final board aligned with the seam below (see illustration, above). With a pencil against the block, and the tongue of the block against the drywall, scribe the entire length of the board. The tongue on the block creates expansion room for the final board. For ease of installation, cut off part of the bottom leg of the groove. After slipping the final scribed board into place, lever or wedge it tight against its neighbor and secure it with face nails.

used upside down so that the width of the full finished face can be traced directly on top of the board being scribed.

The exact scribing process varies slightly depending on the flooring material, as well as on whether you are scribing the board to the drywall before the baseboard goes in, or you are scribing to an existing baseboard, as in the project Brickman describes in the article “Installing Prefinished Strip Flooring” (Nov/15). In both scenarios, set the board to be scribed directly on top of the next-to-last board. Align the edge of the board being scribed precisely with the seam between the boards below (a square on edge can help with the alignment).

If you are scribing to the drywall, place the block on top of the board (again, upside down), with the tongue against the wall. Pull the scribe block along the wall while holding a pencil against the edge of the block. Do this along the entire length of the wall. Most installation instructions call for an expansion space along the edge of the board that will be covered by the baseboard. The width of the tongue on the scribe block automatically provides that space. Saw along the scribe line, giving the cut a slight back bevel to make installation easier.

If you are scribing to existing baseboard, where a tighter fit is required, first remove the tongue from the scribe block. Then follow the same scribing procedure, but with the groove against the baseboard. As before, cut the scribe line with a back bevel and fine-tune the scribe cut with a block plane if necessary. To let the board slip into place more easily, remove about half of the bottom of the groove.

Using a scribe block achieves the same results that you would get with a compass scribe, except that you need to hold a compass scribe perfectly level and perpendicular to the wall while you make your scribe line, which can be challenging. The beauty of the scribe block is that it is made from the same readily available material that you are installing and it positions the pencil accurately and automatically.



After cutting the last board, slip it into place and draw it tightly against the next-to-last board using a flat bar. Align the flat bar with a stud to keep it from damaging the drywall.