Cutting Corners

BY THOMAS DUGAN

For years, I've been thinking that there had to be a better way to "clip" the outside corner where two walls meet at a right angle so that the drywall wouldn't incur as much damage from things banging into it. While products such as plastic corner caps are available to provide protection, these 90-degree corners are not attractive architecturally—to my eye, anyway—and appear harsh and intrusive. I also think that they hinder the smooth flow of traffic.

The standard way to create a clipped outside corner with 2x4 framing is to rip 45-degree bevels along the outside edges of the end studs, then fill in the gap with a "mini-wall." But this method involves a lot of extra studs and cuts and makes the angled corner clumsily intrude on the inside corner of the adjacent space.

My simple, one-board, two-cuts solution creates an attractive outside clipped corner while preserving the 90-degree corner on the inside. I do this by making two 45-degree rips along the edges of a single 2x8, then attaching the rips to the narrower face of the 2x8, as shown below. With the rippings oriented toward the inside of the corner, this one-stud assembly can be used to replace typical two- or three-stud corners.

These bevel cuts are easy to make using either a circular saw or a 10-inch table saw, with a helper or other support to catch the rippings. The only trick to sizing the rippings correctly is to make sure that the

To frame a clipped 45-degree outside corner while preserving a standard 90-degree inside corner where 2x4 stud walls meet at right angles, the author rips both sides of a 2x8 at a 45 degree angle **(1)** to the dimensions shown in the drawing **(2)**. Then the triangular-shaped rippings are nailed to the 2x8 to make the corner stud assembly **(3)**, which he uses to replace the studs where the walls meet.

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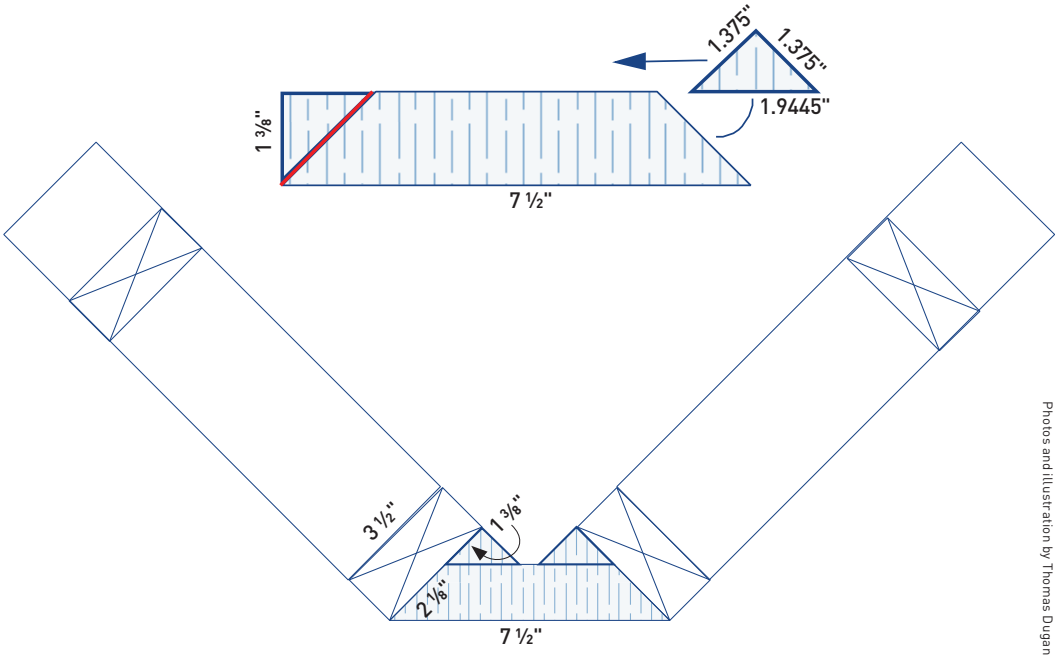

Photos and illustration by Thomas Dugan


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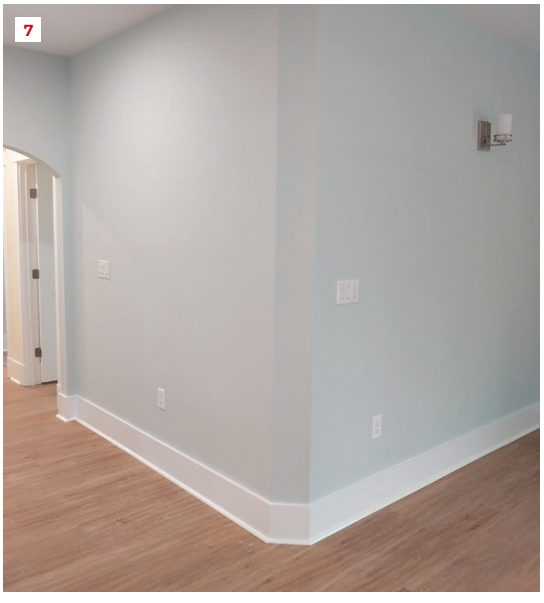
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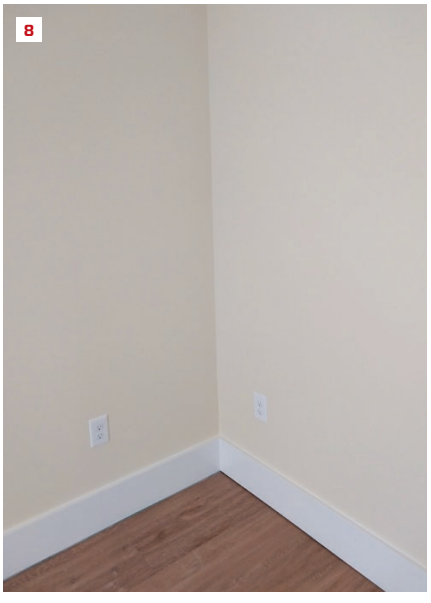
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Once the walls are framed and the corner stud assembly has been installed, the top and bottom plates can be clipped to match with a reciprocating saw, flush cutter, or multi-tool **(4)**. After hanging the drywall, workers trim the corner with a pair of splayed adjustable plastic corner beads and then mud the joints **(5, 6)**. The clipped outside corner adds a subtle architectural element to a room or hallway **(7)** without involving complicated framing or changing the look of the inside corner **(8)**.

kerfs run right down the middle of the edges of the 2x8. You are looking for slightly less than a 2-inch hypotenuse on the miter cut (see drawing, previous page).

This detail requires that the wide corner stud merge with the two adjoining 2x4 walls, but there's no real trick to laying it out. The top and bottom plates are run like a normal 90-degree corner, and once the new corner is installed, you simply cut the exposed points off with a reciprocating saw or flush cutter.

When it's time to tape the drywall, plastic corner bead that opens up for the 135-degree angles is used to finish the outside corners. It's a simple detail, but I've found that everyone who's seen this architectural feature—including other builders—really likes it.

Thomas Dugan is a semi-retired general contractor in coastal North Carolina who specialized in building hurricane-resistant homes.