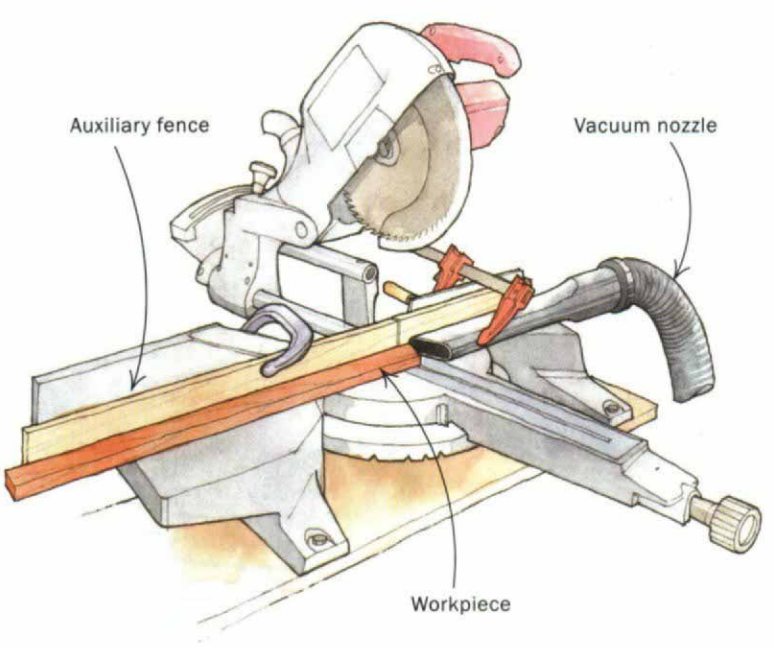
Methods of Work

EDITED AND DRAWN BY JIM RICHEY

A safer stop block



I enjoy turning bowls from segmented blanks that are glued up from many small identical pieces of wood The problem with cutting these small segments on a chopsaw is that many of the pieces will vibrate into the blade where they are either damaged or sent flying across the shop as dangerous projectiles.

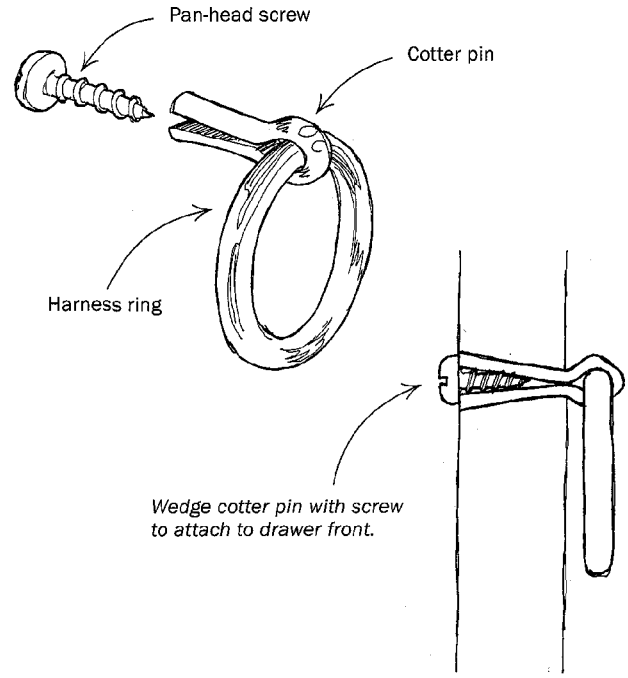
My solution is to use the nozzle of a shop vacuum as a stop block. First, I clamp a ½-in.-thick auxiliary fence to the fence of my chopsaw to create a zero-clearance fence. Then I tune the angled end of my vacuum nozzle on a belt sander to make the edges sharp and crisp. Next, I clamp the nozzle to the chopsaw's fence at the correct distance from the blade, as shown above. After each cut the nozzle sucks up the potentially errant missile before it becomes airborne. Don't forget to empty the vacuum's dust bin before you begin, unless you enjoy looking for a wooden needle in a huge haystack of sawdust. *—Jim Vasi, Williamsville, N.Y.*

Making ring pulls

Here's how to make a trendy-looking ring pull from a harness ring and a cotter pin. Steel harness rings, sold at most hardware or farm-supply stores, are used for hitching lengths of rope and come in a variety of sizes. I use a #7, 1-in. ring for the pulls I make. This ring fits neatly within the eye of a 5⁄32-in. cotter pin.

I usually start by tarnishing the shiny finish to a gunmetal gray in a 24-hr. vinegar bath. You can add a bit of surface pitting to the metal with a 24-hr. bath in household bleach prior to the vinegar bath, if that's the effect you want.

To make the pull, simply open the legs of the cotter pin, slip in the ring and squeeze the legs closed. You can attach the pull by pushing the pin through a hole, bending the protruding portion of



the legs into an L-shape and then hammering the legs, staplelike, into the back of the drawer front. But this looks pretty crude.

A more elegant way to fasten the pull is to cut off the legs ⅛ in. shy of protruding through the back. After drilling the hole for the pull, use the next-larger drill-bit size from the back to enlarge the back half of the hole into an oval shape from top to bottom. Insert the cotter pin into the hole and spread apart the legs. Then screw in a #6 pan-head sheet-metal screw between the two legs to wedge them apart and secure the pull.

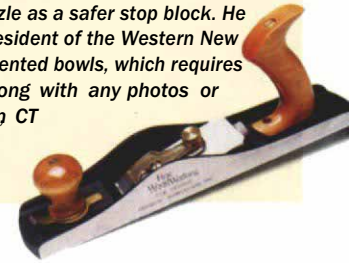
—David Gilmore, Maple Ridge, B. C, Canada

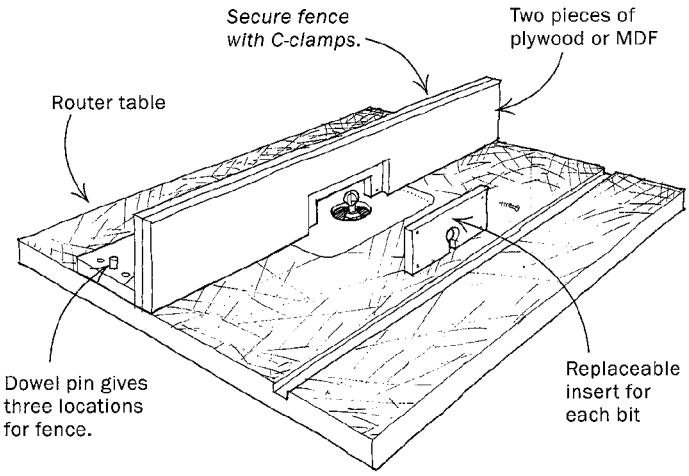
Zero-clearance router-table fence

This zero-clearance fence is an easy project that improves the performance of almost any router bit. The fence is made of ½–in.-thick medium-density fiberboard (MDF). Construction details are shown in the drawing on p. 16. To use this setup with a new router bit, screw a new replaceable insert into the rabbeted recess in the

A reward for the best tip

Jim Vasi won an engraved Lie-Nielsen handplane for his winning tip on using a vacuum nozzle as a safer stop block. He recently retired after 36 years of teaching woodworking to high-school students. Vasi is president of the Western New York Woodturners, an organization consisting of 80 members. His specialty is making segmented bowls, which requires cutting and laminating hundreds of small pieces of wood. Send us your best tip, along with any photos or sketches (we'll redraw them) to Methods ofWork, Fine Woodworking P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506.



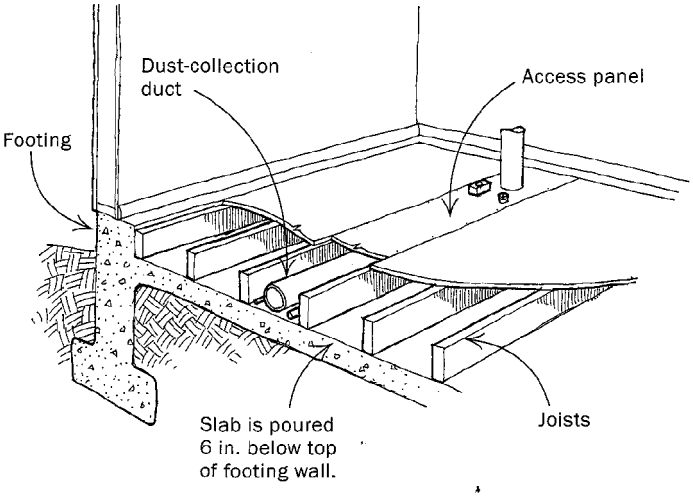


fence. Place the pivoting end of the fence over a dowel in the router-table top, turn on the router and swing the fence slowly through the bit to cut a reverse opening in the insert. The final placement of the fence is secured with two C-clamps. When you change the bit, you will need to install a new insert and repeat the operation. *—Ernie Conover, Parkman, Ohio*

Quick tip: When using a scraper, swipe the edge of it along a block of paraffin after every few strokes. The paraffin lubricates the cutting edge, reducing chatter and preserving the sharp edge.
—Mike Zaslav, Cherry Hill, N.J.

In-floor dust-collection systems

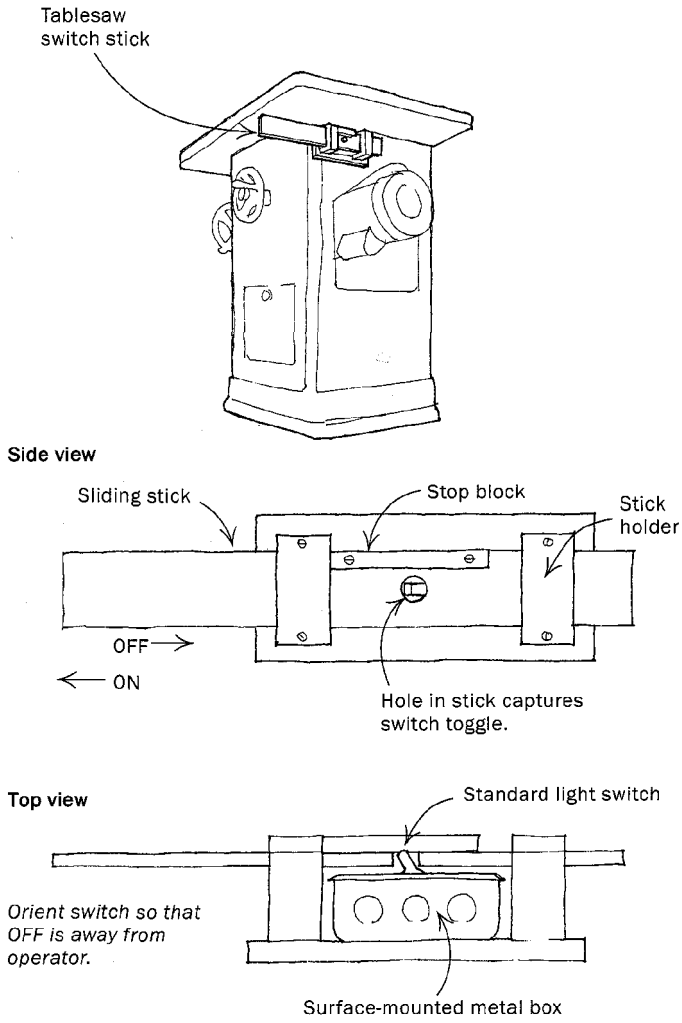
Editor's note: *Both of the following submissions are in response to a Method of Work by Bob Chandler* (FWW #*140, p. 24*).



When I built my shop several years ago, I too didn't want to stumble over air hoses, dust-collection ducts or electrical cables on the floor. My solution was to have the contractor drop the cement floor 6 in. below the top of the footings. I then put in 2x6 joists and ¾-in. flooring to bring up the floor to the top of the footings. This allowed me to put all of the hoses, wires and ducts under the floor between the joists. In addition, this also gave me a wood floor to work on, which is much easier on legs and dropped tools.
—Howard L. Althouse, St. George, Utah

For our new shop we designed a dust-collection system that rests on top of the concrete pad and between the 2x6 floor joists that support a ¾-in. plywood floor. The floor joists are 12 in. o.c, creating a channel that is deep and wide enough to house a 4-in.-dia. PVC dust-collection pipe, a compressed-air hose and electrical cables for floor outlets. The channel is topped off with an access panel. We also ran dust collection to the workbench, a very practical added feature. *—Julie Whittaker, Charlevoix, Mich.*

Tablesaw switch stick



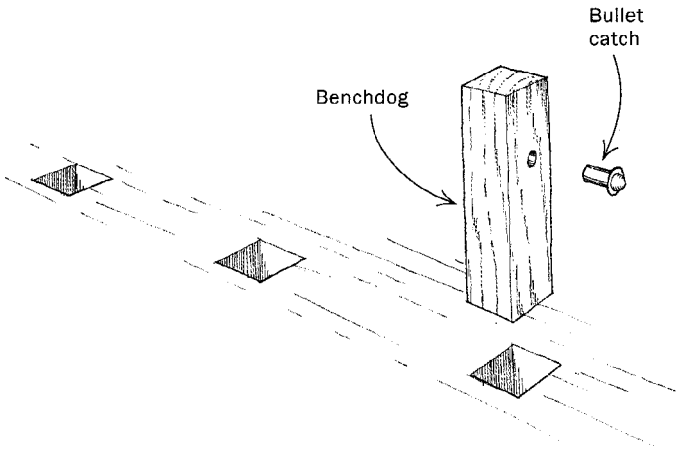
Jamie Buxton's safer tablesaw switch *(FWW#139,* p. 18) is an excellent innovation. But for those of us who are puzzled and discouraged by the gizmos and circuitry, here is a simpler option that has performed well on my tablesaw for several years.

Mount a scrap of plywood to your saw in a location that is convenient to access by hand or a bump with your body. To the

plywood mount a common light switch in a metal surface box, oriented with the *on* toward the operator and the *off* away from the operator. Make a stick with a hole in it to fit over the toggle and extend the switch stick forward of the table. Pull the stick to start, push the stick to stop. Construct a simple stick holder that not only allows free back-and-forth movement but that also keeps your switch stick in place. *—Steven Stroh, Indianola, Iowa*

Quick tip: Compact discs make excellent shims for setting up dado blades. Simply enlarge the hole to your arbor size and insert the discs between the blades to the required thickness. If a disc breaks, take heart: A replacement will arrive shortly in the mail from an Internet service provider. *—Tom Carpenter, Vernon, B. C., Canada*

Bullet catch improves benchdogs



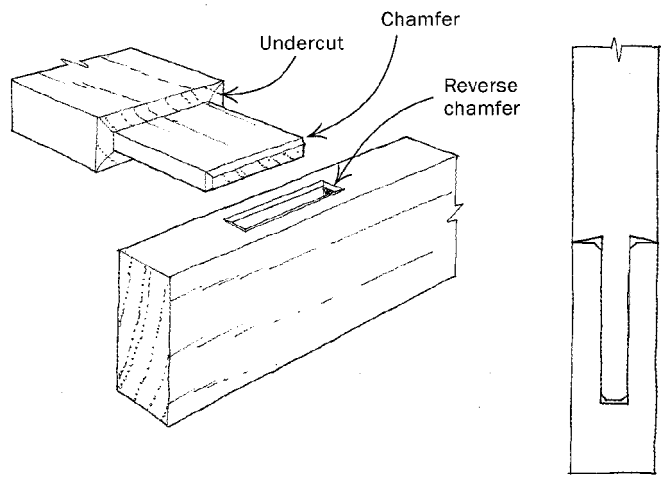
I install a small bullet catch in all of my wood benchdogs. The spring-loaded pin provides enough friction to hold the benchdog at just about any desired height. Just push or pull it into place, and it will stay put. I have used bullet-catch pins in several types of benchdogs, both square and round. It's a simple idea that works very well. *—Mike Griffin, Indianapolis, Ind.*

Quick tip: To locate the correct Alien wrenches quickly and easily, wrap a different color of electrical tape around the handle of each wrench. Also, paint a dab of paint on each tool with a color that matches the tape on the Alien wrench used to adjust that tool.
—Jim Wheeler, Plainfield, Ind.

Mortise-and-tenon tips

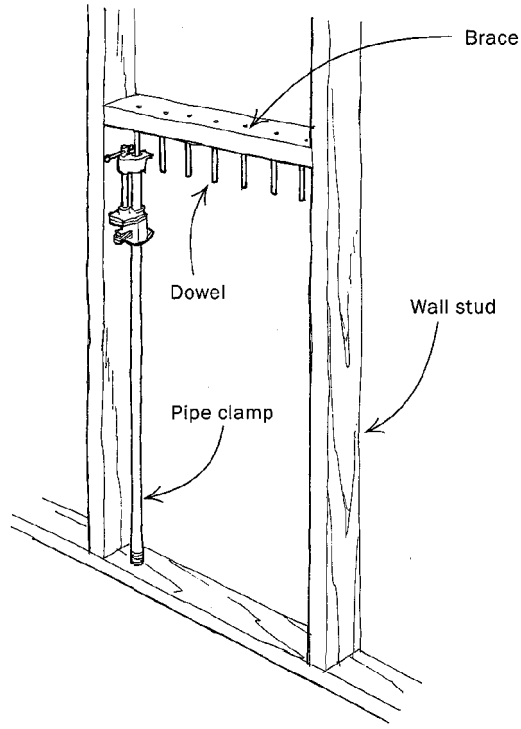
Here are three techniques I use to improve mortise-and-tenon joints. First of all, pare out a slight reverse chamfer on the lip of the mortise before the first fitting. This prevents tearing out a chip of wood when a too-tight tenon is pulled back out of the mortise. The chamfer also creates a well for excess glue to prevent squeeze-out during glue-up.

Second, chamfer the end of the tenon. This makes the tenon easier to start into the mortise and also forms a well for excess glue at the bottom of the mortise. Third, undercut each shoulder of the



tenon slightly. This ensures a tight-fitting, no-gap joint and also helps—you guessed it—reduce glue squeeze-out.
—Michael Bakken, Fresno, Calif.

Pipe-clamp rack



This pipe-clamp storage rack is a simple and easy answer for woodworkers with open stud walls in their shop. Make a horizontal brace to fit between two studs. Drill holes every 3 in. or so, and glue 2-in. long, ¼-in.-dia. dowels into the holes. Attach the brace at the right height for your length of clamps. To store a clamp, simply slip the top end of the pipe onto a dowel and rest the bottom of the pipe on the floor plate. To remove a clamp, lift the pipe slightly and pull out the bottom at an angle.
—ChrisDiCiaccio, Gastonia, N.C.