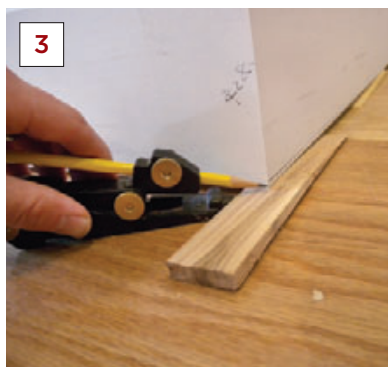
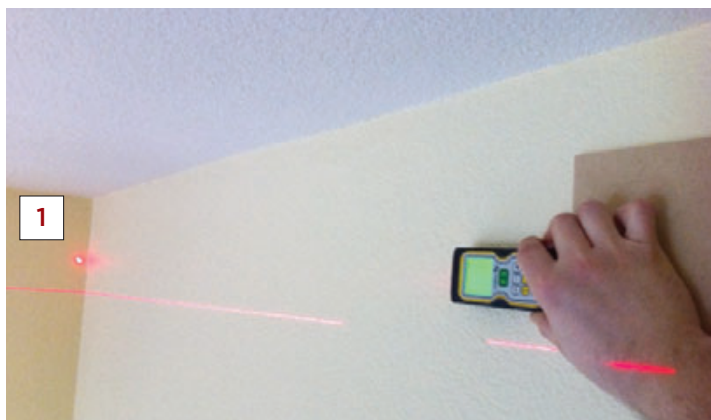


On the Job

Scribing Baseboard, Quickly

by Jesse Wright



Floors are rarely perfectly straight and flat, so it's lucky that on most of our trim jobs we use shoe moldings when running baseboard. But occasionally a customer wants the clean look of shoeless base, so we end up scribing to get a tight fit at the floor. It's more work than installing shoe molding, but we've learned to speed up the process with a combination of old-fashioned carpentry and modern tools.

Lasers. For starters, we use a Stabila LD 400 digital laser measure, which is faster and far more accurate than a tape measure — within $\frac{1}{32}$ inch (1). I walk around the room and call out exact dimensions to my partner, who's at the saw making the cut list.

We also use laser levels to find the high points in a room and to establish a level line to work to (2). We shoot the reference line even with the top of the baseboard or align it with a fillet in the profile.

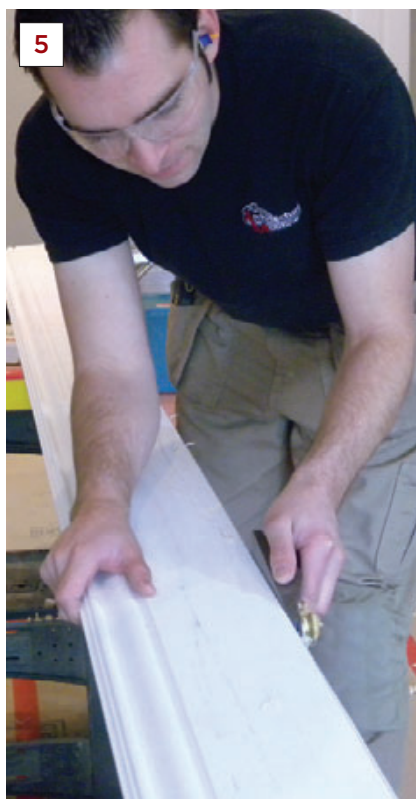
Back bevel. Because of the sanding process, refinished wood floors are often slightly ramped right where the floor meets the wall, especially at the end grain. This tends to hold the baseboard up off the floor just enough to make it difficult to get a tight joint. So especially when we're working with full $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-thick stock, we often start by ripping a 20- or 30-degree bevel along the stock's bottom edge, stopping the cut short of the front edge of the baseboard. Removing this little bit of stock makes scribing with a block plane that much easier.

With the baseboard in position, I set my AccuScribe Pro scribing tool (888/443-3748, fastcap.com) to the largest gap, then carefully run the scribe around the room to trace the floor contours onto the baseboard. The scribe line needs to be accurate, so I use the onboard pencil sharpener now and then, especially if I'm tracing a large room (3).

Usually we rough out cuts freehand on a table saw with the blade set to a 15- to 20-degree angle (4), once again ripping a back bevel to make it easier to fine-tune the cut. This is a fast but potentially

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dangerous technique. Even though we're working with long stock, we don't use a helper for this task because binding and kickback happen if the operator and helper aren't exactly in sync. Instead we use outboard supports for long material.



Portable rollers tend to make the stock veer off-course, but we like using Ridgid's Flip Top stand (800/474-3443, ridgid.com). We wax the surface to help the stock slide. As I rip the waste, I keep the blade about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch away from the scribe line; if more material needs to be removed, I'll make another pass.

Once I've roughed out the cut, I use a low-angle block plane to fine-tune it (5). Some carpenters use belt sanders or angle grinders, but block-plane shavings are much easier to clean up than fine dust



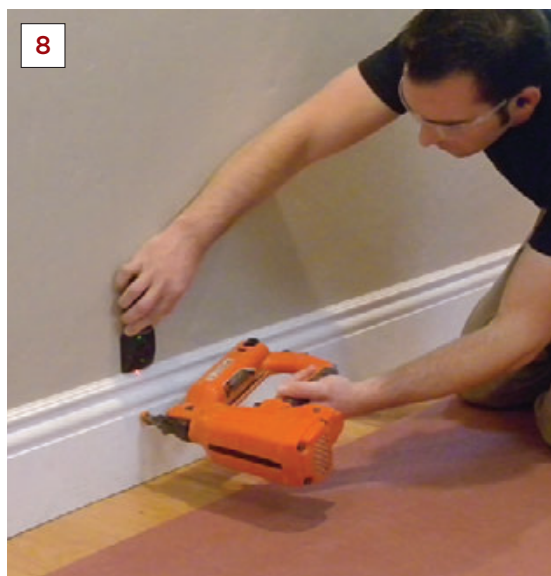
and won't get into your lungs or your client's furniture.

We do sometimes use a Festool RAS 115 sander (6); it's as fast as an angle grinder but has a dust-collection system that captures most of the dust. It's so effective I'm comfortable scribing right in the room where I'm working. And it's so fast, back-beveling doesn't seem necessary, though it's still helpful. In fact, if I need to, I can back-bevel a section of the baseboard just by pitching the angle of the sander. To avoid overcutting the scribe lines, I make light passes and use nothing coarser than 60- or 80-grit paper.

When we're working with profiled stock, we always cope inside corners. If a wall is longer than our baseboard stock, we splice sections together with biscuit-reinforced butt joints before setting the sections of baseboard in place to test the fit (7).

Finally, when nailing off, I don't bother laying out the studs; it's much faster to locate them with an inexpensive Zircon stud finder (8).

Jesse Wright is a finish carpenter and designer with Architectural Molding in Pleasant Hill, Calif.



Scrap Screen-Door Protector

by Dennis Dixon



Traditional wood-framed screen doors are far more popular with my customers than aluminum units. For years, our clients would call us whenever a screen was torn or stretched out, by a child or a pet or just from everyday use. After making lots of these repairs, we developed the bumper detail shown here (1); it's very easy to execute on site, and allows us to use up all our cutoffs of D-profile hand rail.

We paint, stain, or varnish the handrail scraps to match the door, cut a simple bevel on the ends, and lay them out in a pleasing array (2). The rails are installed in pairs, one inside and one out (3), so that the screen is protected from teenagers, toddlers, and pets; the spacing allows people to grab the crosspiece that's at the most convenient height. It's great for pushing the door open from the inside when carrying a barbecue tray.

We use common washer-head screws to install the rails (4). We've used this detail dozens of times, and homeowners love it.

Dennis Dixon is a licensed general contractor in Flagstaff, Ariz.



Putting REScheck to Work for Permitting

by Steve Greenberg

On the project shown here, we converted an uninsulated enclosed porch (1) into a year-round sunroom (2). Since the 160-square-foot project featured a modest footprint with a lot of glazing and not much insulated wall area, I had to be sure the design would comply with our local energy code before we started framing. More to the point, I needed to know that our plans would meet with the approval of the code inspector. We typically build above code, but since Massachusetts adopted the “stretch” code back in 2010, different towns have followed different versions of the IECC, which has created some confusion among both builders and code officials. Using REScheck software, I was able to tweak the framing and insulation details until I had a design that fit the budget and also satisfied our plan checker.

the notable exceptions of Florida, California, and a few other states) and is updated regularly to reflect changes in state and local codes. The program works by using information you enter about the thermal envelope of a new home or addition to calculate its overall average heat transmission rate, or UA (3). You can juggle variables like insulation, glass area, window U-values, and even heating and cooling efficiency.

In the case of the sunroom, I was able to balance the overall amount and type of glazing against adding various thicknesses of rigid insulation to the exterior sheathing; the software instantly lets you see the effect of the design changes you make on overall wall R-value. I was also able to see how deep my joists and rafters needed to be to allow me to use open-cell foam, which in our area is \$2 cheaper per square foot of R-value. (This alone saved more than \$500 on the project.)

Best of all, REScheck generates a PDF report (4) that you can give to a code official to demonstrate compliance. When you’re trying to get a permit so you can get to work, this can speed things along.

Steve Greenberg is a remodeler in the Boston area.

