

Q&A

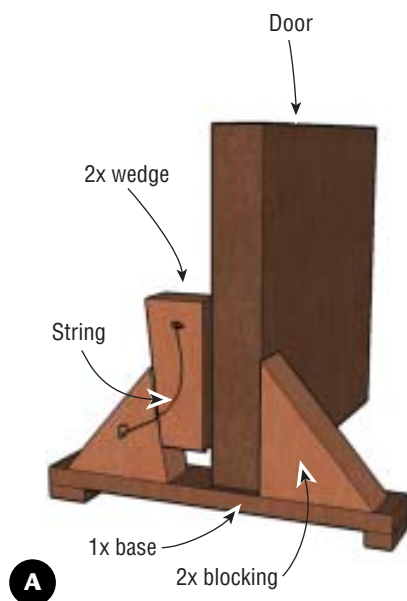
Right Tools for Hanging Doors

Q. I typically use prehung doors, but I'm building a project where I'll need to hang a dozen or more 1³/₈-inch 6-8 interior door slabs in 3/4-inch-thick custom poplar jambs. I also have to bore and install the cylinder passage sets. Could you advise me how to do this cost effectively, and what tools to use? I'd like to buy the proper jigs and bits but may not use them again, so I can't break the bank.

A. Gary Katz responds: I feel your pain. Finish carpentry, especially door hanging, is a tool-heavy trade. Here's the best advice I can give to any part-time door hanger.

First, put together a good door bench or a door stand. You can cobble a stand together from some scraps of 2-by and 1-by (A), or you can make a full-blown bench. I'd suggest making the bench. A good door bench has a lot of uses. The legs fold up, so the bench is easy to store and transport, and once you start hanging doors, you'll never stop — there's good money in it. (See "Hanging a New Door in an Old Jamb," 8/99, for more on building a door bench.)

But it's the tools that cost real money. I'm figuring you already own a good-sized drill, a cordless driver, and a circular saw, so a plane might be your most expensive purchase. As a full-time door hanger, I prefer a Porter-Cable 126, which is sold in a kit, #9118, for about \$400 (B). For just a few doors, you can also use a regular plane, like the Bosch 1594K,



one of the few multi-use planes equipped with an adjustable bevel guide (\$155 on the web).

You might be able to avoid buying a plane altogether if you can purchase prebeveled doors. We use them all the time.

You'll also need a router. For door hanging, I prefer Porter-Cable's 7/8-hp model #100, which, unfortunately, may have been discontinued (C). For a multipurpose router, I'd suggest a Bosch 1617evs (\$170 on the web), which has a micro-adjustment



knob as well as a quick-change template guide system. You'll need that template guide because you'll have to use templates for mortising hinges and locks.

I buy all hinge templates and most lock templates from Templaco (www.templaco.com) because they cost less to buy than to make, and Templaco's templates are always dead-on accurate. For those 1³/₈-inch doors on your job, you'll only need a single-pocket template (D) for 3¹/₂-inch hinges (\$20). If you're hanging new doors in new jambs, you can get a full-length template that lays out all three hinges.

For boring doors, you could buy a good-quality hole saw for the cylinder and a spade bit for the edge bore, and live dangerously! But if you can, when it comes to boring doors, break the bank and go all the way. Templaco sells a couple of great kits (BJ-115 or BJ120, about \$370) that include all the latch and strike templates you'll ever need, plus the boring jig (E) and bits. If you bore more than a dozen doors a year, think about upgrading to their carbide spur 2¹/₈-inch bit (\$127). You'll never regret it. (See "Installing a Cylindrical Latchset," 12/00.)

These are only the basics. When you're ready for flush bolts, mortise locks, and auto-bottoms, contact me at jlconline.com and I'll tell you more.

Gary Katz is a frequent contributor to JLC, author of Finish Carpentry, and moderator of the Finish Carpentry forum at jlconline.com.

Moss on Cedar Shingles

Q. *How can I kill moss growing on cedar shake roofs? And after I've killed the moss, what can I put on the roof to keep it from growing again?*

A. *Paul Fiset* responds: Scrub the surface with a mixture of 1/3 cup household detergent, 1 to 2 quarts of

household bleach, and 2 to 3 quarts of warm water. That should kill the moss. The detergent helps wet the surface, and the bleach kills the growth.

To prevent the moss from returning, you have to create conditions that won't support its growth. It's not possible to keep all dampness off the roof, but you can enable it to dry out faster by cutting back overhanging trees. You can also poison the food source of the moss by applying finishes that contain zinc, or a solution of copper naphthenate with 3% to 4% metal content. Unfortunately, those finishes don't last more than two years, so they require maintenance.

Another method is to install a ridge cap made of zinc or copper. "Bleed" water running down the roof surface as a result of the normal corrosion from those metals will help reduce moss growth. Tucking strips of copper under the butt end of the shingles every 4 to 6 feet down the roof, leaving 1 inch exposed, may also help.

Paul Fiset is director of Building Materials and Wood Technology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a contributing editor to the Journal of Light Construction.

Gutters in Cold Climes

Q. *The jury still seems to be out as to whether to install gutters in a northern climate. Could you please shed some light on this, especially as to how omitting gutters would contribute to leaky basements?*

A. *Henri de Marne* responds: Gutters are helpful and are required in many jurisdictions, but they can cause serious problems in very cold climates. They can fill with ice and cause water to back up under the roof sheathing even if a membrane like Grace Ice & Water Shield has been installed under the shingles. They can be knocked down by ice and require yearly repairs. The downspouts are often

cracked open and discharge water onto the siding, which can lead to rot. I typically recommend gutters only for houses that are very well insulated, have effective attic ventilation, and have gone through one or more winters without ice damming.

Removal or omission of gutters does not have to create basement water problems. Even if you have gutters, you can have a damp or leaky basement if the grading, walks, driveways, decks, or planters allow water to stand against or run toward the foundation.

There are three main criteria for safely eliminating gutters. First, make sure the grade slopes away from the building at a rate of 2 inches per horizontal foot for as far as is practical. When building new, set houses higher to start with, so you can grade to them.

Second, plant a healthy stand of grass or ground cover on the sloping grade for a few feet, starting at the foundation. This is preferable to planting bushes and flowers in flat mulched beds, which allow water to stand and percolate deep. Instead, plant flowers and shrubs a few feet away from the foundation; that way, the homeowners will be able to see and enjoy them from inside, as well.

Third, set flagstones or other paving material in the sloping grade at the drip line of the roof to catch the brunt of the roof water and deflect it.

These measures should ensure that basements remain dry, unless there is an underground spring or high seasonal water table.

Henri de Marne is a contributing editor to the Journal of Light Construction.

Got a question?

Send it to Q&A, JLC, 186 Allen Brook Ln., Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com.

