

Cabinet Installer's Helper

by Carl Hagstrom



How would you describe the perfect helper? My description would go something like this: He never calls in sick, always shows up on time, is never in a bad mood, and once you pay him a weeks' wages, he never asks for a paycheck again. Obviously, this type of worker doesn't exist. But there is a *tool* for cabinet installers that comes close.

It's called a *Gil-Lift* (Gil-Lift, 1605 N. River Blvd., Independence,

MO 64050; 816/833-0611), and it's a portable cabinet lift designed by former cabinet installer Gilbert Wyand. A simple, rugged tool, the Gil-Lift allows one installer to lift up to 300 pounds of overhead cabinets, maneuver them into position, and fasten them to the wall. The lift is stable enough that after raising the cabinets and setting the caster brakes, you can literally walk out of the room, and leave the lift and cabinets unattended (see Figure 1).

Four for the Road

The lift is comprised of four parts that will pack tightly in an installer's van: The rolling base, a two-piece aluminum mast, and the platform and winch that ride up and down the mast. At the site, it takes less than 30 seconds to thread the two boom sections onto the base and drop the winch over the boom.

An alternate base is provided that allows upper cabinets to be installed after the base cabinets and counter are in place. The alternate base is set on the countertop, and the upper section of the Gil-Lift boom, including the

winch, is threaded over the base. The upper cabinets are then lifted into place (Figure 2). A piece of carpet attached to the underside of this base prevents the countertop from being damaged.

Hello Dolly

By removing the bottom section of the boom from the dolly (which takes all of ten seconds), the lift can be used to roll individual or assembled banks of base cabinets into place (Figure 3). In large commercial or institutional projects, the cabinets can be off-loaded in one location, assembled into units, rolled to the final location, and lifted and fastened into place.

Weighing only 46 pounds, the lift is made almost entirely from anodized aluminum, and is shipped fully assembled, ready to be put into service as soon as it's out of the box. The complete unit costs \$475, and can be purchased directly from the manufacturer.

Is it the perfect helper? Not quite. The lift balks when faced with different floor heights, and large tile floors with deep grout joints can make for a bumpy ride. But if you're looking for a tool that gives your back a break, it can't be beat. The Gil-Lift may not be able to run out and get you coffee, but when it comes to moving and lifting cabinets, you'll never hear it complain. ■

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Figure 1. The Gil-Lift allows a person working alone to lift up to 300 pounds of cabinets and maneuver them into place.



Figure 2. Using the alternate base, the author installs upper cabinets after the base cabinets are in place.



Figure 3. The base of the Gil-Lift can be used as a dolly to maneuver base cabinets into place.