

Inhale in Style

by Bill Brockway



The latest high-fashion safety device to hit the job site is the *Respro* line of respirators. Originally designed to protect the lungs of athletes working out in cities with low air quality, the masks are finding their way onto construction sites. The one I tried out was much more comfortable than my half-mask respirator. It's made of a soft, stretchy material called Neotex that breathes and doesn't make your face sweat like the rubber seals on conventional masks. The filter element stops particles down to .03 microns (yes, drywall sanding dust!) and is replaceable. There is plenty of airflow for when you're working hard, and the thing never fogged up my glasses. The different models cost \$40 to \$50, and a replacement filter will run about \$20.

Contact: Boboli/Respro, 11203 63rd St., Edmonton, Alberta T5W 4E5, Canada; 800/473-7776 (U.S. calls). In Canada, call 403/448-0393.

Sound Control Batts

Controlling interior sound is becoming a larger part of the contractor's job. *QuietZone* is the first in a new line of sound control products that Owens-Corning will be introducing over the next few years. The acoustic batts are sized to fit standard 2x4 partition walls and are 15 inches wide by 93 inches long. The increased mass helps absorb sound waves traveling between rooms. Though the material is very similar to



fiberglass, the batt has been designed to stop the transfer of sound, not heat, and should be used only in interior walls. For optimal sound control, the manufacturer recommends running resilient channels perpendicular to the studs before attaching the drywall. *QuietZone* batts come in a package of 16. Cost is about 20¢ per square foot.

Contact: Owens-Corning, P.O. Box 45029, Jacksonville, FL 32232; 800/438-7465.

Easy on the Hands

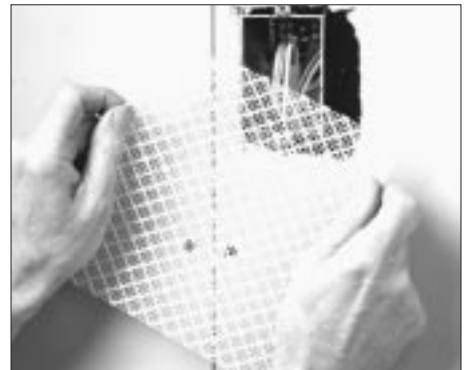


Lots of the jobs we do rip up our hands, and there isn't always a pair of gloves around when we need them. *Komfort Grips* from Acuity put the protection on the tool, permanently. The soft foam rubber grips slip onto a tool handle lubed up with liquid soap.

When dry, the grip stays put. I installed them on my wheelbarrow and now the thing is much easier to drive. The grips come in two sizes: one for handles from 3/4 inch to 1 inch, and one for 1 1/8- to 1 1/2-inch handles. They retail for about \$5 a pair.

Contact: Acuity, 73 Paul Dr., San Rafael, CA 94903; 800/211-7711.

Hole Patcher



If an outlet cutout ends up too big or just in the wrong place, *FibaTape* can help you patch it fast. The self-adhesive mesh sticks to drywall — simply cut out the box and mud right over the tape. The patch is also good for fixing the traditional "fist-through-the-wall" hole. A package of 25 seven-inch-square patches costs about \$22.

Contact: Perma Glas-Mesh, P.O. Box 220, Dover, OH 44622; 800/762-6694.

One-Stop Tiled Shower Pan



Now you can get a shower base with ceramic tile already installed. The Laurel Company offers bases in four tile colors and with tiles of ten different sizes. The fiberglass bases come fully assembled and ready to install. Prices vary depending on pan shape and tile choices.

Contact: Laurel Co., 1620 Albritton Dr., Suite 7, Kennesaw, GA 30152; 800/344-6926.

Undermount Router Table



A new Router Table from Freud looks like a good one. The split fence comes equipped with see-through guards and a dust collection hookup. The 1-inch-thick MDF top has two miter guide slots in it — one for close work and one for use with larger pieces. The table weighs just under 54 pounds without a router. The glass-filled plastic insert can handle up to a 3½-hp router. The table lists for \$495. Optional accessories include feather boards, hold-downs, a power center with large emergency off switch, and additional inserts for fast tool swapping.

Contact: Freud, 218 Feld Ave., High Point, NC 27264; 910/434-3171.

They Call the Wind Shindaiwa

The new EB480 Blower from Shindaiwa lends new meaning to the phrase “broom clean.” The backpack-mounted blower runs at just 69 decibels — quiet enough to use without ear



protection. The two-cycle, 43-cc engine weighs about 25 pounds in operation and shoots out 415 cubic feet per minute of air at 180 mph. Other features include a fully adjustable padded harness and a 70.5-ounce fuel tank for long running time. The EB480 sells for about \$499.

Contact: Shindaiwa, P.O. Box 1090, Tualatin, OR 97062; 503/692-3070.

Drywall Hanger's Helper



This tool, invented by a contractor in Indiana, could make your receptacle layouts more accurate and easier to cut. The Recept-A-Guide clamps onto either a T-square or the 2-inch-wide body of a framing square. After lining it up on the box and marking the position of the square on the floor, you hang the drywall. Then place the square back in place and cut inside the template. The Recept-A-Guide costs about \$23.50, including shipping.

Contact: B&C Inc., P.O. Box 3816, Terre Haute, IN 47803; 812/235-8335. ■

