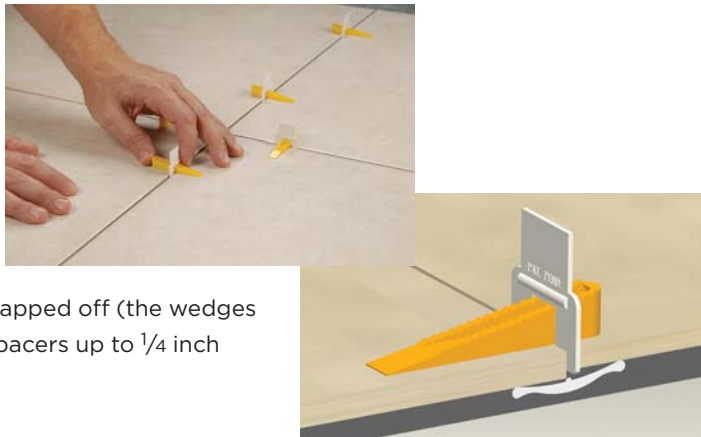


Products

by Michael Springer

No Lip, No Slip. Setting large floor tiles so that they're flush with the surrounding tiles — with no raised edges, or “lippage” — can be tricky. Q.E.P.'s *LASH* clips hook under tiles and hold them flat against the bottom of a wedge bridging adjoining tiles. After the mortar sets, the clips are snapped off (the wedges are reusable). The product can be used with grout spacers up to 1/4 inch wide. A bag of 96 clips or wedges costs \$10.

Q.E.P., 866/435-8665, lashspacer.com.



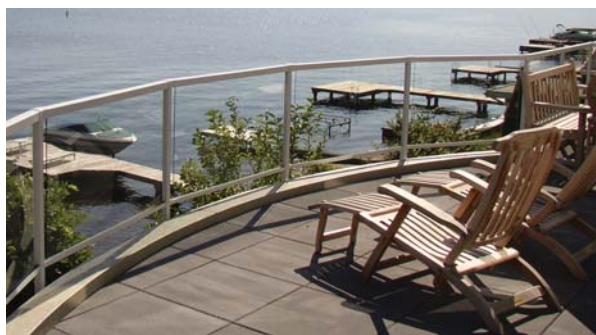
Mounting Blocks. It's possible to frame out penetrations through fiber-cement-sided walls with a block of 2-by lumber, but the wood may not last as long as the siding. Mid Atlantic Supply makes fiber-cement *SturdiMount* mounting blocks with openings sized for vents, pipes, and electrical boxes. The blocks are preflashed and have vinyl nailing flanges. They come in various James Hardie colors or ready to paint for \$13 to \$18 each.

Mid Atlantic Supply, 704/821-3314, midatlantic supply.com.

Smart Switch. Lutron's new *Radio Powr Savr* is a wireless sensor that turns a room's lights on or off in response to movement. Installation is simple: First, you replace the existing standard switches with switches equipped with radio receivers; then you mount the battery-powered sensor on the ceiling and aim it.

For a large area, up to three sensors can trigger a single lighting circuit, and for maximum illumination, a single sensor can be set to control up to 10 radio-switched lighting circuits. A switch costs \$120, and the sensor \$130.

Lutron Electronics, 888/588-7661, lutron.com.



Rail With a View. Alco's *Vista* aluminum railings have square or round handrails with glass panels beneath for an unobstructed view. They come in 36- or 42-inch heights, in double or single top-rail styles, and in a variety of colors. According to the manufacturer, railings with mechanically connected baseplates — like the *Vista* models — have proven much stronger in testing than ones with welded plates. Prices start at about \$49 per linear foot.

Alco, 800/667-2526, alcoventures.com.

Products



Floor Protection. Protecting job-site traffic surfaces — everything from a polished marble foyer to a colored-concrete driveway — can help you avoid damage claims. *Ram Board* floor protection is vapor-permeable, so the materials underneath it can cure, but it's also tough enough to use again and again, says the maker. The product is 46-mil-thick fiber-reinforced paperboard made from 90 percent post-consumer recycled materials, and comes in a 38-inch-wide by 100-foot-long roll for about \$57.

Ram Board, 818/848-0400, ramboard.com.



Versatile Railing. Trex has revamped and expanded its *Artisan* composite railing line; new baluster styles include narrow aluminum tubes and curved bars (shown) and even glass panels. The system features a self-spacing, drop-in baluster guide that requires no fasteners; balusters from any of the company's other railing series can be incorporated, greatly increasing style and color options. *Artisan* components come in white or black. A complete 6-foot section of the style shown is priced at \$189.

Trex, 800/289-8739, trex.com.



Siding Panels. Fiber-cement siding isn't limited to flat lap planks; patterned panels are available, too, like the stucco (shown) and grooved styles Nichiha has added to its *NichiPanel* line. Made in the U.S. from 60 percent recycled materials (including newspaper and industrial fly-ash waste), the panels are 5/16 inch thick and 4 feet wide and come in 8-, 10-, and 12-foot lengths. A 10-footer runs about \$55.

Nichiha USA, 866/424-4421, nichiha.com.



Crawlspace Ventilation. Without adequate ventilation, crawlspaces often develop a dank, musty odor. Tjernlund's crawlspace ventilators are designed to deal with this condition. Triggered by an adjustable humidistat or a manual switch, they fit in standard brick or block openings, are rated for use in damp locations, and contain thermostats that turn them off at temperatures below 40°F to prevent freezing. The *UnderAire VID* (shown) costs \$168.

Tjernlund, 800/255-4208, tjernlund.com.

