

Renovators Ltd.

A quarterly newsletter building industry knowledge.

Spring/Summer, 2005

Finding Studs in Finished Walls

Hanging a picture frame, bookshelves or a mirror may seem like a simple task, but it can turn into a disaster if you don't find a stud to hold that heavy object. Finding a stud can be as simple as tapping on the wall with your knuckles or as high-tech as using a sensor that measures the density of the wall.

The "Tap, Tap, Tap" Method

An old fashioned way to search for a stud is to rap the wall with knuckles or a hammer. (Attach tape or thin padding to the face of the hammer to prevent marring.) The solid sound of the wooden stud beneath the wall will be different from the hollow sound produced by the spaces between studs.

Once you locate a solid area, drive in a test nail. If you are lucky, you may hit a stud on the first try — but don't count on it. More than likely, you'll miss to one side and end up making several trial holes before hitting pay dirt. Of course, any unwanted holes you make will have to be patched.

This method is most effective on drywall or walls which are covered with sheet paneling material with no form of rigid wall backing. Rigid and/or well-insulated walls make it more of a challenge. A plaster and lath wall, for example, may sound solid no matter where you tap it. When it comes down to it, you may find that your ear can't distinguish any difference and that all that tapping is getting you nowhere.

The "Let's Go Fishing" Method

If you think you know the general placement of a stud but just can't pin it down, this method should help. It creates an unwanted hole, but one hole



is better than several. This method can be used in combination with the other methods mentioned here, and is often used as a last resort.

- Drill a small hole at a sharp angle toward the place where you anticipate the stud will be.
- Insert an insulated wire with electrical tape over each end through the hole until it contacts the stud. The wire should be heavy enough to be rigid, but thin enough to require a small hole: A length of insulated, 14 gauge home wire, for example, would be ideal.
- Bend the wire slightly at the hole, so that when it is removed you'll have an approximate indicator of the distance from the hole to the edge of the stud. It's only approximate because the measurement was made at an angle. The actual distance will

be slightly shorter depending upon the angle and the distance between the hole and the stud.

- Using the wire and the hole as a reference, mark the stud location on the wall. Remember to add up to 3/4" to the measurement. You want

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Exterior Painting Tips

► We've moved!

Because of steady growth, Renovators Ltd has moved to a new location. You can find us at:

14260 W. Greenfield Avenue, Ste 203
Brookfield, WI 53005

Our new numbers are:
Phone **262-782-7860**
Fax **262-782-7865**.

Visit us online at
www.RenovatorsLtd.com

Pamela Pelot, Renovator Ltd Assistant Designer has completed her Masters Degree in Architecture from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Pamela's responsibilities include construction and "as built" drawings and some design. Pamela formerly worked as an Architectural Intern for HGA.

KUDOS to you!

We take pride in the quality work and attention to detail we provide for you. Nothing shows us that you value this more than when you share our name with your family and friends. We want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation.

- **Tom Herzog** thank you for referring **Mike and Jennifer Egelhoff**.
- **Dave and Corine Meyer** thank you for referring **Darrell Megal**.
- **Chris and Richard Pluta** thank you for referring **Bruce and Pauline Henry**.
- **David and Angela Carron** thank you for referring **Tim and Kristy Casey**.
- **Carmel Builders** thank you for referring **Frank Kopenski**.

You've picked out the perfect colors and properly prepared your house, now it's time to get to work.

Need a Primer?

A primer will help paint adhere to the surface, providing a more uniform appearance. Use a primer when painting over new wood, bare wood, or repainting over existing bright or dark colors. Ask your salesperson and read the labels before making this decision.

Application

- Complete exterior repair and preparation and choose the correct painting tools.
- Check the weather forecast before starting the job. Rain or high wind can cut a day of painting short and ruin what's already been applied. Today's exterior latex is fast drying, but it still needs time to dry before getting rained on. Oil-based paint definitely needs curing time; check the manufacturer's recommendations. Paint when temperatures are above 50° and below 85°. Heavy rain or high humidity on a newly painted uncured surface can cause blistering.
- Set the ladder up and cover bushes, flowerbeds, decks and sidewalks with dropcloths. Tie back shrubs to prevent them from rubbing against fresh paint.
- Paint the windows and trim first; otherwise, a ladder leaning against your newly painted siding will leave marks. Don't close the windows completely after painting to prevent sticking. Leave a very small strip of paint around the edges of the windowpanes to seal out the weather.
- Paint the siding next. Start at the top, painting horizontally as you work your way down. Use a scaffold if possible, or move the ladder regularly. Over-reaching on a ladder is dangerous; plus the paint application will be uneven if you can't see the lap marks well.
- Paint the foundation last. Avoid painting in direct sun. Paint the west-facing side in the morning and the east in the afternoon.



Sizing up siding

Aluminum and vinyl siding present special challenges when painted. Aluminum siding frequently suffers from excessive chalking and may contain dents and imperfections. Pressure wash or hand-scrub to remove chalk and rinse afterwards. Satin or low lustre paint is the best choice for aluminum siding because it hides dents and makes the imperfections less noticeable. A spray application gives the best appearance. Vinyl siding has the same problems with one additional limitation. Vinyl siding has a tendency to buckle or warp irreversibly from hot, direct sunlight. Darker colors will absorb more heat, so select a paint color no darker than the original color of the original vinyl.

Storage and Disposal

- Clean paint from the rim of the can. Seal container lids tight by tapping with a hammer and a block of wood.
- Store solvent-based paint cans upside down to prevent a skin from forming.
- Avoid extreme heat or cold.
- Disposal methods vary by community. Check your local environmental, health, and safety laws. Some paints contain flammable or combustible ingredients or solvents that may be toxic. Always provide adequate ventilation when painting. If you cannot get enough ventilation in the work area, use a respirator. Follow label instructions for storage.

Custom Living Space



a] A dining nook with built-in seating and a shelving niche was created and tied into the existing kitchen.

b] The addition included a full basement, first floor family room and dining nook, and a second floor master bedroom.

c] The dining nook is connected to the existing kitchen, which was reconfigured to accommodate the new renovations.

d] A front view of the completed home.

Chad and Laurie Lehman came to Renovators Ltd with a desire to make their Wauwatosa home larger and more conducive to family living for their growing family.

Their home started with 3 bedrooms, 1-1/2 bathrooms, and a working kitchen without a dining area, for a total of 1,350 square feet. The completed project brought that square footage to 2,150.

Renovators Ltd. began the project by adding a new family room onto the first floor, with french patio doors leading out into the back yard. This addition included a full basement, dinette area and a second floor (see photo “b”). The existing formal dining room was then opened up, allowing access to the family room.

A dining nook with built-in seating and a shelving niche was created and tied into the existing kitchen. The kitchen had been

remodeled a couple of years prior, so we used the existing cabinetry in a new configuration and added cabinets to further increase efficiency and enhance the beauty of the space.

The second floor addition, above the family room and dinette, incorporates a spacious master bedroom with a cathedral ceiling, a large walk-in closet and master bathroom. The master bathroom includes his and hers vanities and a glass, neo-angle shower. We made some changes to one of the bedrooms allowing an existing second floor bedroom access to the master suite addition.

The entire exterior was resided with 4” premium vinyl siding, new fascia, gutters and a dimensional shingle roof. The original wood shutters were replaced with vinyl shutters adding longevity as well as beauty.



“Finished Walls”

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to work from the center of the stud, not from its edge.

The “Wonders of Technology” Method

Using an electronic stud finder is the surest method of locating a stud beneath a finished wall.

A low-tech and inexpensive stud finder uses a magnet to locate nails or screws which fasten wall materials to underlying studs.

These units will find the nails and screws, but they can also pick up metal conduit and galvanized pipes, so a little creative cross-checking in different areas of the wall is prudent when using these tools.

- Check 16” and 24” to the sides of a given reading to see if another stud is indicated. If so, this confirms the idea that the first indication was actually a stud.
- Bear in mind that nails in studs provide intermittent readings, while galvanized pipe and metal conduit provide constant readings to the magnetic finders.

The simple and **unobtrusive pencil marks** you make near the ceiling will make **finding studs much easier** next time.

The surest, most elegant method of stud-finding doesn’t rely on tapping, trial holes or feeling about with a length of wire. Electronic stud finders locate studs by measuring the density of a wall. These units flash a light when a stud is found. By coming toward the stud from both ends, you can find and mark its edges, and then accurately determine its center.

After You’ve Found a Stud

Once you are sure you have located a stud, mark it with a light pencil mark. Use a plumb bob — a simple weight on a string — to transfer the mark up to the corner where the wall meets the ceiling. If the job you are performing requires that you know the locations of other studs along the wall, they can be found by measuring outward from your initial mark. Studs will usually be located either 16” or 24” apart, although the placement of windows and doors can complicate the situation. Double-check the anticipated stud locations with a stud finder.

The simple and unobtrusive pencil marks you make near the ceiling will make finding studs much easier next time. If you need to see the marks clearly during a job that requires fastening to several studs, put temporary pieces of masking tape at the marks to make them conspicuous until the job is complete. A plumb bob suspended from the mark will provide you with the vertical line of the stud.

This newsletter is a forum to learn about new techniques, industry standards, methods and individual stories. If you have ideas, articles, photos, questions or a subject you would like to see published, for consideration please contact us at our office: RENOVATORS LTD, 14260 West Greenfield Avenue, Suite 203, Brookfield, WI 53005 or call 262-782-7860.

*A quarterly newsletter to help
inform our customers and build
awareness and knowledge in the
remodeling industry.
We appreciate your business!*

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