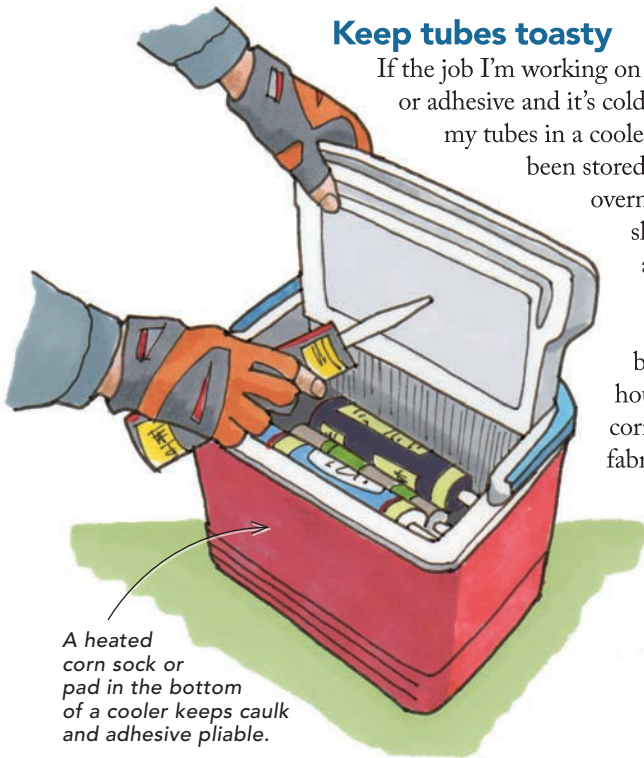


Keep tubes toasty

If the job I'm working on requires caulking or adhesive and it's cold outside, I store my tubes in a cooler. If the tubes have been stored in a heated place overnight, the cooler should keep them in a workable condition throughout the day. On very cold days, before I leave the house, I microwave a corn sock (one of those fabric bags used to heat sore muscles) and throw that in there with them.

—JOSH RISBERG
Prior Lake, Minn.

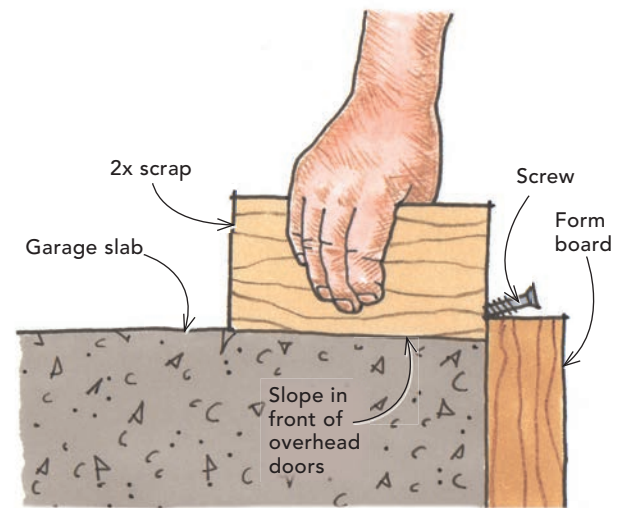
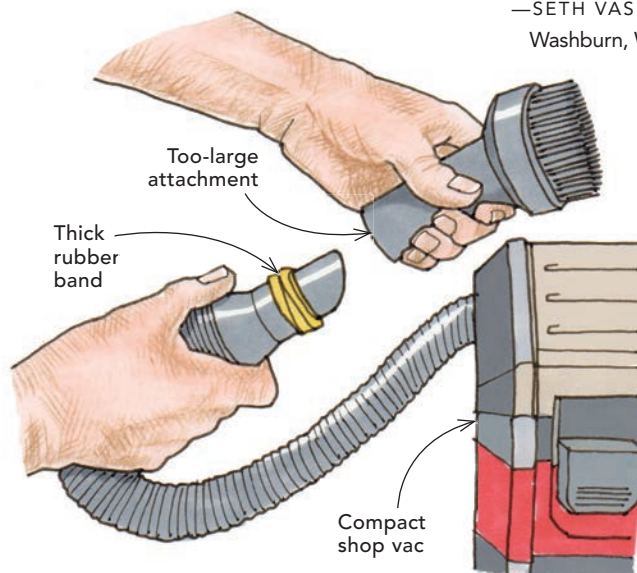


A heated corn sock or pad in the bottom of a cooler keeps caulk and adhesive pliable.

Ad-hoc hose adapter

I have a cordless shop vac that I love, but all the attachments I own that fit my larger vacs are too big for the cordless version. A simple solution I discovered is to wrap a heavy-duty rubber band around the end of the nozzle to enlarge the diameter. I use the ones that grocers use to hold broccoli and other vegetables together. A thick rubber band takes up just enough space to seal the gap and is easy to remove when I want to use a properly fitting attachment. When not in use, I just move the rubber band up onto the hose or toss it in the battery compartment.

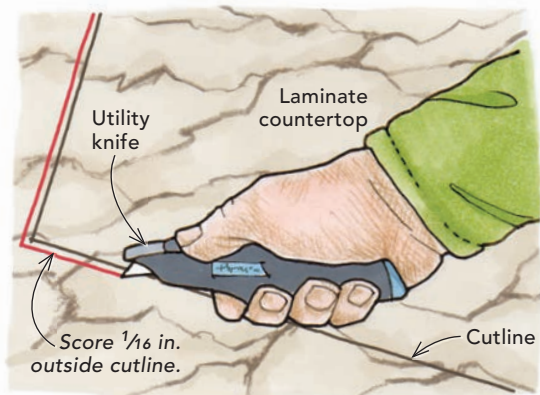
—SETH VASSER
Washburn, Wis.



Simple screed for sloping slabs

I like to slope the sections of garage slabs located on the exterior side of overhead doors. This helps shed rainwater and keep the floor inside high and dry. I accomplish this with a 2x block the same length as the width of the walls. I attach a screw to one side of the block, up from the bottom the same distance as I want the surface to drop. After the slab has been floated and before it's been troweled, I remove the excess concrete in that area by pulling the block along with the non-screw end riding on the top of the concrete and the screw riding along the form. To avoid sloping the wrong spot, I confirm the location of the overhead doors with the contractor and homeowner to make sure that the location is accurate and has not changed from the original plans.

—ERIC WISNER
Lakeville, Minn.



Chip-free laminate cuts

Before I cut laminate countertops to length or create cutouts for sink basins, I use a utility knife with a new blade to score the laminate about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. outside the cutline. This helps prevent the sawblades from chipping the brittle laminate. On my most recent project, I created chip-free cuts around the whole perimeter using a circular saw for the long cuts and a jigsaw to finish the corners.

—MIKE GUERTIN
East Greenwich, R.I.