



## Issue 25, July 2022

Hi Steve R,

Summertime. The time for family vacations, backyard barbecues, camping, and oh yeah... home improvement and DIY projects.

I applaud all you DIYers reading this. If there's a job to be done in your home, you tackle it straight on. Whether you need to lay tile in the bathroom, install a new sink, pour concrete for a patio, replace brake pads on your car, build a retaining wall, or even paint the whole house. Nothing deters you: you have the tools. Plus, any new job might be a good opportunity to buy a new tool specific to the task. (Admit it, you've been eyeing that new tile cutter anyway.) By taking on DIY projects you learn new skills and save money by not hiring a professional.

That's exactly how I used to be, especially after buying my first house. Money was tight (to say the least) and honestly, hiring a professional seemed ridiculously extravagant and something I would consider only for the direst of emergencies.

This is how I was raised. I rarely recall contractors or repair people coming to our house for anything but the most esoteric jobs, such as repairing a garage door opener. My dad pretty much did it all because That's What You Did. I remember him swearing at leaky pipe repairs and spending hours gapping spark plugs and adjusting the timing in our 1971 Datsun station wagon. He would spend an entire day fixing a leak in the roof that would probably take a roofer an hour.

Yet, I'm pretty sure there were a million other things he would have rather been doing. I don't think he took any particular pleasure or satisfaction in those jobs. He just did them because they had to be done.

A bit of clarification. Today, “do it yourself” often invokes much more fun, non-essential and creative activities. Things like retrofitting cargo vans with sinks, laminate flooring, and color-changing LEDs. This modern #DIY trend is fantastic, but that’s not really the type of DIY I’m talking about here.

After years of attempting broad-spectrum, “must do” DIY...fixing plumbing problems, digging trenches, replacing windows, laying tile, landscaping... I realized that quite often these tasks were either my first attempt, something I hadn’t done in years, or something physically more demanding than I was willing to address. I no longer gained any satisfaction from doing these odd jobs because I began to see that I wasn’t very good at them and I wasn’t saving a whole lot of money. Coming to this conclusion felt like an embarrassing admission. I’m a “guy with tools”. I should be able to maintain, repair, and improve my home.

Today, my willingness to take on a DIY project comes down to a simple cost/experience analysis on a job-specific basis. How much will it cost me in terms of materials, time, and frustration versus how much experience I have? For example, I have never built a patio out of pavers. I watched YouTube videos that certainly made the process look doable, but upon reflection, it became clear that the process would take a lot of time, the floor would probably be filled with mistakes, would be potentially uneven, unlevel, and most likely would end up looking like a DIY patio rather than a professional patio. Maybe if it were a small utility space out of sight, I might give it a shot, but I was unwilling for my first attempt at laying pavers to be the showcase feature of our backyard. In the end, I hired a professional and his crew who do this work day in and day out. They built the patio in a day and it looks fantastic. The cost of labor was worth it, considering the amount of time it would’ve taken me, not to mention the physical toll and emotional stress.

That’s my primary deciding factor whether I should hire a pro: *Is this something I’ve never done and am unlikely to do again.* To be sure, there are still plenty of chores I’ve done often enough that I’m comfortable tackling: painting rooms, replacing outlets or wall switches, installing ceiling lights, etc. Then there’s those gray area jobs like installing drywall. I’ve done it a few times, but I haven’t done it enough to get invisible seams or cut accurate outlet holes. My results always look amateurish.

Instead, I focus on the one DIY I find enjoyable and rewarding: woodworking. I don’t build anything because I have to. There’s never an emergency desk to build. We dive into the hobby overwhelmed, but it doesn’t take long to build upon our experiences, always learning new skills and refining old ones.

Of course, as a person with a workshop, this doesn’t stop people from asking me to do odd jobs and repairs around their houses because of the misconception that woodworkers are sorta like handymen. “You’re a tool guy, can you install a new digital lockset on my front door?” I mean, sure, I can read the instructions and fumble through the job and get it installed. But without even looking at it, I know it’s going to be a frustrating and time-consuming experience. I guess that really is old-school DIY: I’ll get it done, but I’d rather be building an end table.

Have a great month!

Steve

---

## Pop into summer projects!

I think out of all my projects, this has to be the summeriest of them all. I mean, what says summer more than popsicles and relaxing on a garden bench? Here's a fun project from 2017 you might want to try. I guarantee it will generate comments from every guest to your yard.



---

## June podcast round up: Movie props and graffiti

I published two of my favorite episodes of [The WTS Podcast](#) in June. The first was a fun discussion with Scott Reeder about how movie props are made, just in case you were curious how actors can safely roll around on broken glass.

The second is an absolutely fascinating conversation with Jon Grim about art and the art of graffiti. Sure, we all see graffiti every day, but have you ever taken the time to consider the artform itself? It's an enlightening episode about the nature of art and the ethics of graffiti.

Check out the podcast on all podcast platforms or at [thewtspodcast.com](http://thewtspodcast.com).

---

## Community Highlight

Beautiful bedroom set

I absolutely love how warm and inviting this room is. Christine, a member of [The Weekend Woodworker](#) and [The Weekend Workshop](#) built the complete set from plans she drew up.

It reminds me of a quaint B&B I would love to spend a weekend at! Well done!



---

## This Month's Member Projects

Check out these awesome projects made by members of [The Weekend Woodworker](#) and [The Weekend Workshop](#).



### Overhead optimization

If you need a little extra space for lumber storage (or any storage for that matter) don't forget to look up. Keeping lumber overhead, as Erik has done here, is a great solution, presuming it's not so low that you bonk your head!

## Fantastic storage

Speaking of great storage...Check out this storage cabinet from Jessica! Frame and panel doors, trim molding, plenty of space. Nice.



## Built up BMW

Here's a great idea from Domenic for incorporating a table saw into a very large version of the BMW that doubles as an outfeed table.

Thanks for reading,

- Steve

P.S. If you are new this month, you can read last month's issue of Notes From the Shop [here](#).

Can't get enough WWMM? Subscribe on [YouTube](#) or connect on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

Looking to share this newsletter with others? Have them subscribe [here](#) or share this [web version](#) of the newsletter.

Sent to: team@theweekendwoodworker.com

[Unsubscribe](#)

