

PRO tips

BY MARK PETERSEN editors@thefamilyhandyman.com

HOUSE WRAP SMARTS

Let's face it—installing house wrap is not a lot of fun, but with today's emphasis on energy efficiency, it's here to stay.

In recent years, there have been several changes in the building codes that

apply to house wrap installation (none of which makes it any easier to put up), and building inspectors have been rigorously enforcing these new codes. Here are a bunch of installation tips and techniques to speed up your installation and help keep the inspector off your back.



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This is my story

I used to be more active. I used to run, play basketball, tennis, football... I was more than a weekend warrior. I woke up every day filled with life! But now, in my late 30's, I spend most of my day in the office or sacked out in front of the TV. I rarely get to the gym – not that I don't like working out, it's the nagging pain in my knees and ankles. Low energy and laziness has

Customer Satisfaction Speaks for Itself!

4 out of 5 customers purchase a 2nd pair within 3 months.

got me down. My energy has fizzled and I'm embarrassed to admit that I've grown a spare tire (I'm sure it's hurting my love life). Nowadays I rarely walk. For some reason it's just harder now. Gravity has done a job on me.

Wear them and you'll know

That's what my doctor recommended. He said, "Gravity Defyer shoes are pain-relieving shoes." He promised they would change my life—like they were a fountain of youth. "They ease the force of gravity, relieving stress on your heels, ankles, knees and back. They boost your energy by propelling you forward." The longer

he talked, the more sense it made. He was even wearing a pair himself!

Excitement swept through my body

I received my package from GravityDefyer.com and rushed to tear it open like a kid at Christmas. Inside I found the most amazing shoes I had ever seen – different than most running shoes. Sturdy construction. Cool colors. Nice lines... I was holding a miracle of technology. This was the real thing.

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- Have instant comfort
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- Elevate your performance

I put them on and all I could say was, "WOW!" In minutes I was out the door. I was invincible; tireless in my new Gravity Defyer shoes. It was as if my legs had been replaced with super-powered bionics. What the doctor promised was all correct.

No more knee pain. I started to lose weight. At last, I was pain free and filled with energy! I was back in the game. Gravity had no power over me!



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- 85% Ankle & foot pain gone
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- Most comfortable shoe ever owned

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Tack, straighten, fasten

When starting a new row, don't fasten the whole vertical length of the wrap right away. Get the roll into position, and attach a few fasteners in the center of the paper. This will allow you to roll out several feet and still be able to adjust the roll up and down without creating wrinkles. Wrinkles not only look sloppy but can also trap water.



Talk to your subs

If you're the general contractor, make sure there's an extra roll of house wrap at the job site for the framers, electricians and any other sub who's going to be attaching objects to the wall. (Include instructions for installing it!) Soffit stringers, trim boards and electrical meters all need house wrap behind them.



Cut to workable sizes

A windy day can make house wrap installation a frustrating experience at best. So cut full rolls down to more manageable sizes with a circular saw. Most saws won't cut all the way through a full roll, so cut as deep as you can, then twist the roll until the cut is complete. Smaller rolls means more tape on the horizontal seams, but the labor saving is worth the extra trouble and expense.



Overlap 6 in. or more

Overlap all seams at least 6 in. And make sure to think like you're shingling. Work from the bottom up so that higher rows overlap lower ones.



Don't cut out window openings!

The way we used to deal with window openings was to roll right over them, cut them out, then move on down the wall. It was quick, but there's a much better way.

After the opening is covered, make one cut with your knife straight up and down in the center. Next, cut the house wrap flush at the top and bottom of the opening, creating two flaps. Wrap the flaps inside the building, past the jack stud, before cutting off the excess. At the top, slice several inches up and away at an angle, and hold the flap up with a piece of tape (it will be folded back down and taped after the window is installed).

The opening is now ready for pan flashing and a window. This method will meet the requirements of most window manufacturers, and best of all, the inspector will be happy.

Avoid cheap house wrap—or plan on expensive callbacks

"Perm rate" is the rate at which a house wrap allows water vapor to pass through it. Bargain house wraps often have low perm rates and they should be avoided. In cold climates, this is especially true for older homes with little or no moisture barriers. Moisture will escape through the wall cavity and sheathing, and if the house wrap doesn't allow it to pass through fast enough, it will condense and accumulate in the form of frost and ice. When the ice thaws, you'll end up with wet sheathing and/or wall cavities—not good.

Bargain house wraps have perm ratings in the 8 to 12 range. Instead, choose a quality house wrap like Tyvek, with a perm rating of 54.

No more staples, gentlemen

The good old days of using a hammer tacker to install house wrap are gone forever. Today, most house wrap manufacturers require their product to be installed with cap nails or cap staples. This change definitely slows down the process, but on the upside, capped fasteners hold house wrap to the wall up to 25 times better than staples.

Using them will assure you of a good night's sleep on those windy nights knowing the house wrap you installed last week is not blowing all over the neighborhood.



Meet the "Stinger"

Yes, you can hand-nail capped fasteners, but it'll take you forever. Pick up a Stinger Cap Staple Hammer for \$50. It works like a hammer tacker, only it sinks capped nails instead of staples. There is a learning curve to using the Stinger, and the caps and staples aren't cheap (\$30 for a box of 12 rolls), but it beats the heck out of hand-nailing cap nails.

CAPPED FASTENER

3" TAPE

2" TAPE

Save time—buy 3-in. tape

Years ago, only vertical seams required tape, but no longer. Now every seam must be taped, and most manufacturers recommend that a minimum of 1 in. of the tape be sealed to each side of the seam—that's hard to accomplish using 2-in. tape! Instead, buy 3-in. rolls. If your house wrap supplier doesn't stock 3-in. tape, it should be able to order it. If not, like practically everything else, it's available online.

Use flexible flashing on existing windows and doors

If you're installing house wrap around existing windows and doors, most building inspectors require those windows and doors to be sealed directly to the house wrap. This means you have to roll a butyl-style tape up onto the edge of the brick mold or window itself. This can be a tedious operation, especially if you're working with a super-sticky tape. Here's a suggestion: Don't peel off the window tape backing all at once; do just one section at a time.



Prime wood siding

Water tends to condense on house wrap, much more so than it would if there was just wood sheathing behind the siding. That water will penetrate wood siding and lift off the finish. So it's more important than ever to prime the back side of wood siding before it's installed.

Every wall penetration needs tape

It's not only seams that need taping—everything that penetrates a wall needs it too! Regular house wrap tape is usually sufficient.

Here's how to deal with a pipe. Cut out around it as closely as you can, then make two angled cuts up and away from the top of the pipe. Tape the flap up to keep it out of the way, and then starting at the bottom, tape the pipe to the wall. Finally, fold down the flap and tape it up.



Leave a chunk in the middle

House wrap is easy enough to cut with a sharp utility knife, but cutting a smaller piece off the roll can be a pain. Cutting the first half always goes slick, but when you get to the last little bit, it tends to crumple up. You can avoid this by starting in the middle and cutting one half, then the other. Leave a small section of wrap intact, and cut off the other half. Then simply tear the piece away from the roll.



Patch large holes and tears

Inevitably you'll have to deal with a tear in your beautiful handiwork. Small holes and tears can be repaired with tape, but larger ones require a patch. Here's how to do it. Make a horizontal slice in the house wrap just above the damaged area and slide in a patch, making sure to cover the hole by 2 in. in every direction. Tape up the seams and get back to making money.



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