

# Professional Installations

by T. Scott Stose

## Time-Saving Techniques

If you find yourself installing multiple pieces of art that are in like-size frames, there are numerous techniques you can use to save time. When like sizes are installed in like size rooms as well, the installation can go very swiftly. The time needed to install one frame can be narrowed to a matter of two to three minutes per frame using the following methods.

By creating either a template or a measuring stick for placement of hanging hardware, you can shave time off the process. For the purpose of this article, I'm discussing jobs that use three supporting/locking brackets per frame. Two on top and one bottom center. There are many security systems available, some require two brackets at top both sides, others only a single larger bracket in the top middle. It is also assumed

that a security installation is being provided in the job.

### Make A Template

Use of templates can both save time and prevent mistakes. A template comes in handy when like-size frames and like-size walls are both present. Templates work best when you can measure off a close reference point (such as a wall or door frame) within just a few inches or feet.

Acrylic is an efficient material from which to make a template. It's quite durable and is worth its price in the time saved. The key to look for is that it be virtually clear and rigid enough to stand six feet tall without flopping over. A good thickness for the template is between  $\frac{1}{16}$ " to  $\frac{3}{32}$ ".

Place the frame on one side of the plastic and look through it to the back of the frame to determine where to mark for your brackets. Next drill a  $\frac{3}{16}$ " diameter hole at each location (see Figure 1).

When you hang the art, you place the template against the wall, and mark through the hole onto the wall. This shows you where to install the brackets. If you keep your template square and are careful about transferring your frame size to the template, you will not need to level your frame with a bubble level.

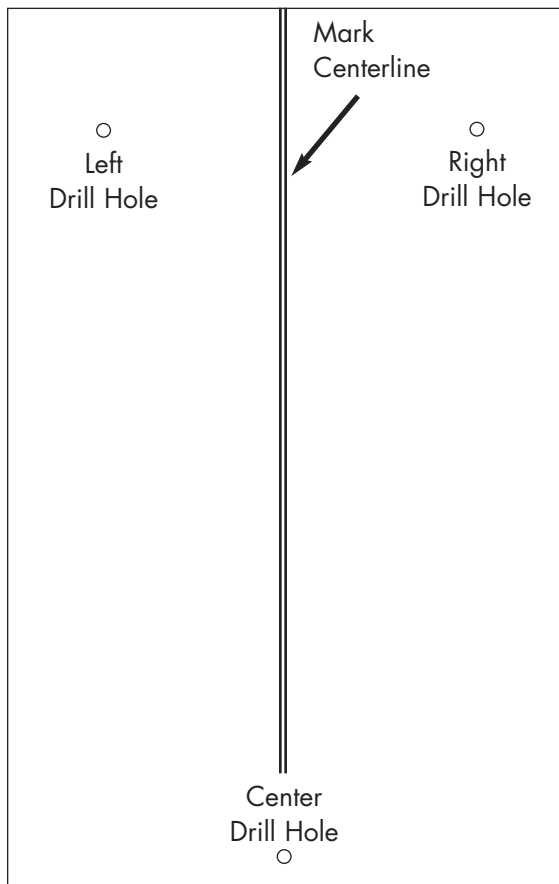


Figure 1: By making a template from a clear material like acrylic, you can determine the placement of brackets from a single frame and use the template for the rest.

If the location of a frame is further off a wall than the width of your template, you can use a measure stick or tape measure to find the center of your frame and make the centerline of your template align with this mark. This is easily achieved since your template is clear and can be pre-marked to

eral measurements. Color-coding with different color wire for each size minimizes confusion.

Purchase a piece of wood that is 1" high, 4" wide, and 8' long. In my business, I use a piece that is 16' long, but 8' is probably best for most people. I suggest buying #2 spruce as it is an inexpensive

this method it is not necessary to be exact trying to find a visual mark on your measuring stick since the pencil point will automatically find the mark for you.

Similarly you could also cut grooves in your stick. The first method, however, is adjustable and the second is not. Figure 2 will help to visualize this. Here, H=Height, L=Left side, C=Center bottom, R=Right side. A fifth wire can be used to determine the height for the center bracket, which is different than the left and right brackets.

If you want to use the same stick for more than one frame, simply color code each set of markings. Once your measuring stick is complete, you can measure single handedly and mark with the other. Simply butt one end to a wall or door frame and measure exactly every time, with little effort.

You can then stand the measuring stick on the floor to obtain the height information as well. Utilization of this method virtually eliminates mistakes and saves times with this repetitive task.

In the past, we have installed over 10,000 pieces on one job and these methods have really come in handy. While you may not do installations on that scale, it's still true that if you save labor, you save money.

If you have any installation tips you'd like to share or would like to see a specific installation topic discussed, please send them to me at [FFandEinst@aol.com](mailto:FFandEinst@aol.com) or send them directly to [PFM](mailto:PFMeditor@hobbypub.com) at [PFMeditor@hobbypub.com](mailto:PFMeditor@hobbypub.com) or fax to (732) 446-5488. ■

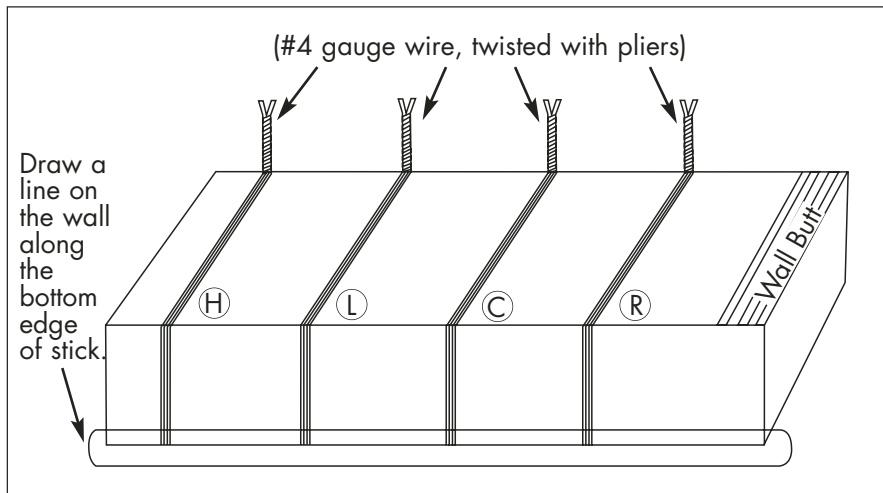


Figure 2: When you hold the wall butt against the wall and draw a thin line along the bottom of the measuring stick, the wire causes the line to make a dimple in the straight line. Once you take the measuring stick away, the dimple shows where the bracket should go. The wire in this diagram is only to demonstrate the concept, and their distances from each other will vary.

show the frame center.

A template can be used over and over by highlighting the current hole that is needed with a dry-erase marker. One template can be used to mark several frame sizes by color-coding the holes.

## A Measuring Stick

A second time-saving method is to simply replace your tape measure with a measuring stick. This will minimize the time wasted pulling out your tape measure every time and it collapsing at a critical moment or having to measure long distances requiring two persons.

One stick can work for several frame sizes and can be used for measuring height and width or lat-

wood. Look for somewhat clear stock with minimal warping. It is hard to find good #2 spruce, so don't worry yourself too much on perfection.

The simplest method for marking your measuring stick is to wrap one single strand of solid wire (similar to #4 gauge stranded picture wire in diameter) around your stick at the desired spacing for the bracket. Twist it tight on the other side like a wire tie on a bread bag. This makes the wire dig into the wood a little bit and prevents slipping.

When you lay your measuring stick against a wall and you trace over the stick, your pencil will bump up over the wire and make a dimple in your marking line. With