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from **WORKBENCH** magazine

Create an Instant Finishing Room

Several weeks ago, we ran a short survey on the *Workbench* web site asking people about their garage-based workshops, the problems they face, and how they solved those problems. We found out that space, or a lack of it, is the number one headache for garage shop woodworkers. As a "garage shopper" myself, I'm in total agreement.



It's no big deal for me to leave one car out on the driveway so I have room to work. But creating a separate finishing area is out of the question for most of us. I found a quick solution to this problem and it's one that doesn't cost much to build. Using two sizes of PVC pipe, some bungee cords, and some wood scraps, I built some spring-loaded poles that I use with some plastic sheeting to create an instant finishing room. (Note the window in the photograph -- always provide adequate ventilation when working with finishes.)

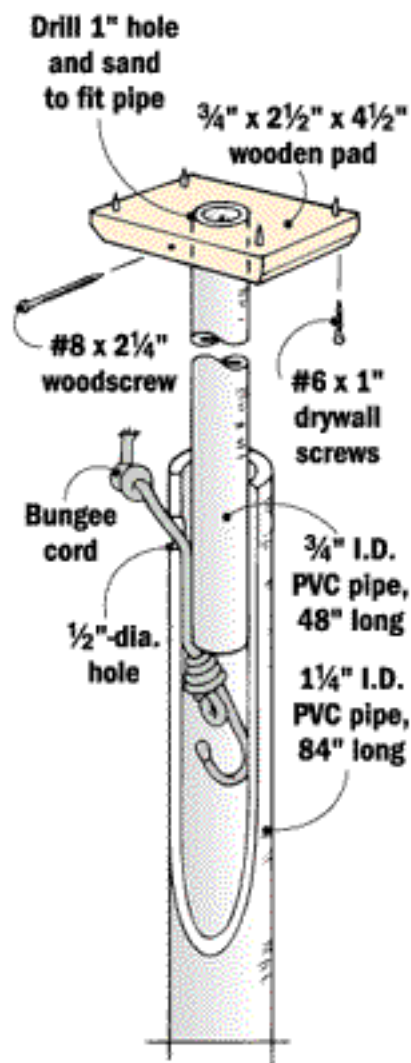
I got the idea from a contractor who was building an addition at a neighbor's house. He had some high-tech extruded aluminum poles with various adjustments, but basically they just held the plastic in place over the doorway to keep dust from getting into the rest of the house. I don't know what he gave for his high-tech poles, but I made mine for less than \$5 each.

Assembling the poles is easy. Start by cutting a 1 1/4" I.D. PVC pipe 84" long, then drill a 1/2"-dia. hole through one side near the top. Cut the hook off one end of a 32"-long bungee cord and feed that end through the hole, then tie a knot in the cord. Feed the end with the hook into the pipe. Now cut a length of 3/4" I.D. PVC pipe 48" long. Fashion a wooden pad to fit on the top end of the pipe and attach it with a screw as shown in the illustration. Now just slip the smaller pipe into the larger pipe until the end contacts the hook on the bungee cord.

To increase the pole's tension (or lengthen the pole), pull some of the bungee cord out of the hole and tie it off in a loop. The screws in the wooden pad help grip the plastic as you raise it into position and also grip the ceiling. For a non-marring pad, cover the wooden pad with a piece of foam carpet padding.

You'll find this tip, and nine other great *Garage Shop Solutions* in the March/April issue of **Workbench**. Whether you try just one or use them all, it will make your garage shop a better place to work. This issue of **Workbench** also features a *Garden Arbor* system that includes a great-looking arched-top cedar arbor with add-ons such as a bench, gates, and modular fence panels. You'll also want to check out our comparison test of six *Top-Notch Jigsaws* to find out which features to look for and which models performed the best.

Have a great weekend,
Kerry Gibson
Online Editor, Workbench



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