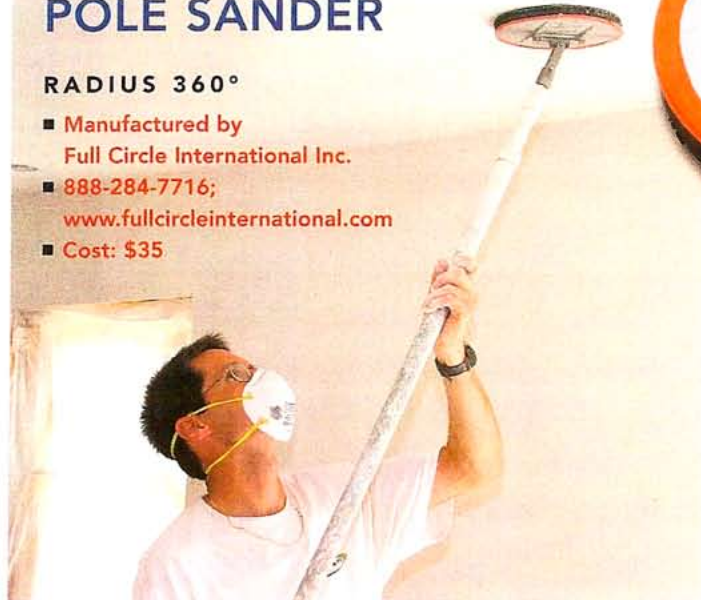


NOT JUST ANOTHER POLE SANDER

RADIUS 360°

- Manufactured by Full Circle International Inc.
- 888-284-7716; www.fullcircleinternational.com
- Cost: \$35



SANDING TAPED SEAMS and fasteners on drywall may not be the most prestigious part of my job, but my customers want smoothly finished surfaces, so it's a necessary evil.

The traditional pole-sander setup helps to provide the leverage needed to smooth drywall seams and remove excess compound around fasteners, not to mention that it keeps the sanding head at a distance so that dust isn't falling directly into my eyes. The trouble with these rectangular-headed sanders is their tendency to catch an



edge and flip over, leaving digs and scratches that have to be repaired. I like to think

of sanding as the last step in a drywall job, so the thought of filling gouges at that point is less than appealing.

I've tried alternatives, and I'm convinced that I own at least one of every pole sander out there. After trying the Radius 360°, though, I have no problem saying that it's the best drywall sander that I have ever used.

The Radius 360°'s 9-in.-dia., die-cast aluminum sanding head is difficult to flip over, and it covers a lot of area in a short time. The pivoting head is covered with 1/2-in.-thick foam, so it conforms easily to curved surfaces and outside corners. Hook-and-loop fasteners hold the sanding pads firmly in place, yet make them easy to swap when they wear out or when I need to change grits.

This tool was invented by a guy who sands drywall for a living, so if anyone knows what works and what doesn't, he should. In fact, I believe that this design eventually will replace the traditional rectangular-headed sander altogether.

Myron R. Ferguson is a drywall contractor in Galway, N.Y., and the author of Drywall: Professional Techniques for Great Results (The Taunton Press, 2002).

A TAPE MEASURE THAT LIES FLAT

FLATBACK TAPE MEASURE

- Manufactured by FastCap LLC
- 888-443-3748; www.fastcap.com
- Cost: \$6

TAPE MEASURES GENERALLY have a thick concave blade designed to remain rigid over long distances, which is helpful if you're working alone. But if you ever have to take precise measurements on curved walls or lay out multiple cuts on a sheet of plywood, you know that the tape's concave surface sometimes can work against you. FastCap's FlatBack tape is designed specifically for these tasks.

This thin, flexible tape lies flat so that you can make marks without having to roll the tape to one side to get an accurate reading. And just like the other tapes in FastCap's ProCarpenter line, the FlatBack has a writable/erasable strip on the near side of the tape. This strip lets you note the position of hinges, doors, and drawers, using the tape like a story pole. There's also a writing area on the body of the tape so that you don't forget measurements on the way to the chopsaw.

The FlatBack tape also has a built-in standard-pencil sharpener. Instead of hacking your pencil to a brittle point with a utility knife, just use the tape's sharpener. Each 16-ft.-long tape is available in standard and metric/standard configuration

Justin Fink is an assistant editor at Fine Homebuilding.

