



by Perry Wright

Porta-Nails: When You're in a Jam

Thinking it was a one-time thing, it was a pleasant surprise to be asked to compose another article for *FCI*. Doing an article is not so easy when the tools you're asked to evaluate and write an informative article about are tools I personally don't use everyday. In the land of concrete, it is rare I get to fasten down a thin engineered wood floor. With that said, I have been requested to write a report about two new tools from Porta-Nails. Believe it or not, it is another stapler, for thin wood flooring. The Porta-Nails, PORTAMATIC 475 Twin Trigger 20, for 1/4" to 1/2" tongue-and-groove engineered, laminate, and solid wood flooring. The other new tool is the PortaJack-PRO, a floor tightening jack.

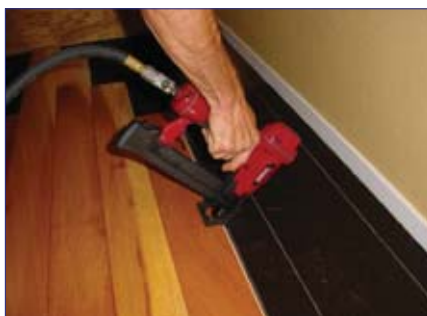
The Porta-Nails, PORTAMATIC 475 wood flooring stapler is a precision-built tool, designed for high speed, and high volume performance measuring 10-1/8" long, 9-5/8" high, and 2-5/16" wide, with a weight of 3.2-lbs. It is easily maneuverable and fits into tight places, get-

ting you a little closer to the wall.

The PORTAMATIC 475, uses 20-gauge wire, with a 3/16 of an inch crown width, that are 1" long. Eliminating the pimple effect you may get with thicker gauge staples. Using a standard 1/4" N.P.T. fitting, making the tool ready for business, without modification. Operating with an air pressure between 70 to 100 p.s.i., depending on the thickness and hardness of the wood your working with, to achieve the correct sta-

ple seating on the tongue. Every tool has different air pressure needs, so one tool may need an adjustment on the regulator, compared to another, to properly fasten the flooring. It is not recommended to operate the tool below or above recommended air pressure.

The PORTAMATIC 475 operates on a sequential trip system. The system requires the user to hold the tool against the work before pulling the trigger, making fastener placement accurate and easier



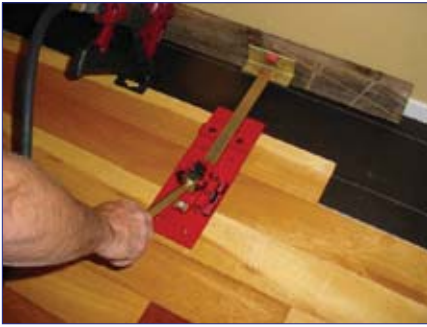
Using the Porta-Nails and Portamatic 475 to install an exotic 3/8-inch engineered board.



Using the dual trigger to fasten, with a reverse grip if needed in tight quarters.

About the Author

Perry Wright has been installing various floor coverings for 32 years, starting at age 12, helping family during summer breaks. He has owned his own professional installation company for 23 years, now called "Floorcoverings Done Wright", based in Austin, Texas. Perry is a student of wood science with Howard Brickman, an NWFA Certified Wood Flooring Inspector, an ITSFC Certified Carpet Inspector, and a CFI Certified Expert Floorcovering Installer.



Working the PortaJack with the comfortable, locking handle level.



The PortaJack, locked in position, holding the board tight.



Using the PortaJack to tighten and lock a crooked board and hold it in place tightly, while fastening with the Portamatic 475.

then other staplers on the market. The system has a positive safety advantage because it will not accidentally drive a staple if the tool comes into contact against the wood flooring, or anything else, while the user is holding the trigger compressed.

Unique to the PORTAMATIC 475 is the dual trigger feature. This feature allows the user multiple options for hand operation and trigger actuation to choose from, depending on the method and position the user is in, for a given application.

Loading ammunition into the magazine is fairly basic as with all fastening tools. Depress the magazine release button located on the magazine channel, pull back the spring-loaded feed to fully open the magazine. Insert the 1-inch ammo with the points against the bottom of the magazine, push the release button and feed forward until the latch is engaged. Simple.

The fastener position is adjusted to accommodate different thicknesses of wood flooring, between 1/4- to 1/2-inches, by way of adjustment knobs located on the positioning shoe that some call the foot. The shoe design and adjustment feature provide real close control of the fastener position to reduce the nasty occurrence of split tongues that lead to a noisy loose floor or surface pimples from improper fastener location on the tongue. The staple should enter the flooring where the vertical and horizontal planes meet on the top of the tongue, on the tongue

side of the flooring. I have actually inspected a floor stapled into the groove side! YIKES!

Lastly, the tool has an easily cleaned firing tip, in the case of an unfortunate jam, with a convenient holder for the Allen wrench needed to open the tip up, which is located on the side of the magazine. Of course, disconnect the tool from the air supply, and unload the magazine before attempting to clear a jammed staple from the tool. Also remember to put the Allen wrench back in its convenient holder for the next jam that eventually happens to all pneumatic fastening tools.

All in all, the Porta-Nails, PORTAMATIC 475 is a sweet tool capable of delivering, when time and production mean profits.

The PortaJack-PRO floor tightening jack is a useful tool to tighten gaps between boards as you're fastening the wood flooring down. Bowed boards don't phase this heavy-duty tool, and it is quite heavy. There were no specs on the weight of the tool, but I estimate it weighs 10- to 12-lbs. It is 15-3/4" long at its shortest, and 18" fully extended, but has nearly 6" of travel to account for the adjustability to reach your work.

This tool is capable of delivering up to one ton of force. By locking it into place, holding the bowed or crooked board in place, this frees up your hands while you fasten down the bowed board. It can be placed so the faceplate is inline with a

wall stud, to ratchet on, or using a 2-by-4 to avoid pushing through the plaster or sheetrock commonly found on the walls in residential homes built today.

Place a length of 2x lumber as a support board in front of the ram and faceplate of the PortaJack-PRO. There are holes in the faceplate to use screws and secure the lumber support to the tool so it becomes one tool. Or, don't use the screws, and just push off the loose 2x lumber support. Place against the wall so two studs support the lumber support. Ratchet the comfortable handle until contact is made with both wood flooring and the wall and tighten the gap. Be careful as you can push the wall from its foundation if you get carried away. Yes, there is that much force. To release the pressure on the tool, move the handle all the way forward to the stop, like you're going to get another bite, then push the handle a little harder forward, disengaging the gears.

You can also screw down the PortaJack-Pro's base to the substrate and push the flooring tight when there is not a wall close enough to push from. Pretty slick, if I do say so myself. Now, if I can figure out how to anchor it to concrete and be able to use it on my concrete glue-down work, holding it tight, before I go crazy with my 3M blue masking tape.

These two great tools from Porta-Nails will perform flawlessly, providing you and your clients with a quality installation in less time than it did just yesterday. **FCI**