Using a Water Level

Approved Methods

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This section was compiled by volunteers of Habitat for Humanity to comply with current construction practices, we have used the Internet for the content of some of the contents in this section.

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Using a water level to set the starter strip for siding

Water levels are a great way to find a level spot from one spot to another.

Use 50 to 100 feet (15 to 30 m) of tubing with a $\frac{5}{16}$ in (0.79 cm) diameter. Keep in mind the longer the tube, the more water you will need to use. Use distilled water if possible.

Hold 1 end of the tubing to the spot where you marked on the exterior wall as the top of the starter strip where it will reside. Make sure the open end of the tube is facing upward.

- Make sure there are no kinks or knots in the tube so the water can flow easily through the tube.
- Select the lowest point on the exterior of the house for this point. The bottom of the starter strip is typically set at 1.25” below the top of the cement blocks. Use a small scrap of the starter strip to mark the top point of the starter strip location on the end of the wall.
Have another person hold the other end of the tubing at the other end of the wall (the unmarked end of the wall) of the house and fills it with water. Keep the end at the same height as the marked end of the tube, filling the tube until the water sits 2 to 3 inches (5.1 to 7.6 cm) below the marked end on the wall.

- Check that there are no air bubbles in the water once you have filled the tube, as this can throw off the level.

Put 1-2 drops of food coloring in the water to make it easier to see. This will make it easier to spot the level of the water in the tube.

- Another option is to use windshield wiper fluid in the tube instead of water so the liquid is colored and easy to see.
Use your thumbs or a cap on the ends of the tube to prevent the water from spilling. You can then move the water level to another spot so you can use it to mark the rest of the house.

At the unmarked end of the house, slide the free end of the tube up or down until the level on the marked end is lined up with the starter strip mark. Mark the exterior surface to line up with the free end of the water line in the tube. You can snap a chalk line (pull it as tight as possible and have another person snap the line in the middle) between these 2 points to crate the top of the line for the starter strip.