

An A-Frame Goat Shelter

Construction Made Simple For The Carpentry Impaired

By Kathleen Claps

Being carpentry impaired can be frustrating for a goat keeper. When straight cuts are crooked and more nails are bent than driven into the wood, even simple projects can be challenging. If you are tired of hiring or bribing someone to build everything for your goats, here is a chance for self sufficiency.

This functional, nice-looking A-frame shelter can be built by almost any able-bodied person with a saw and a hammer. Even if you bend some nails, or don't cut straight, your shelter will look good and last for many years. This 4 x 4 foot building looks like a pup tent, with the sides made out of plywood and a frame consisting of two triangles made out of treated 2x4s. It comfortably houses a Nigerian Dwarf doe and her kids, or two adult does who are friendly with each other.

Most pallets fit well inside the shelter to serve as a floor. Two people can pick up the shelter and move it.

It costs about \$45 to build one shelter. If you build more than one, the cost goes down slightly because you can cut two lengths of flashing out of a ten foot piece. If you plan to put back walls on your shelters, you will make most efficient use of your materials by building three or four at a time.

To save a little more money, look for paint that has been mixed incorrectly at the hardware or paint store. Sometimes you can find



So what if you bend some nails? Get a little help from a friend and build your goats a plywood pup tent.

great colors for less than half the price of custom-mixed gallons.

Getting Started

1. Assemble the materials and tools on the list. If you are using power tools, be sure to review the safety precautions.

2. Now lay out your three, 8 ft. long 2x4s on the ground or on sawhorses with the wide side up. Look at Figure 1. This is a pattern for cutting the frame of the shelter.

Make pencil marks at 6 inches, 42 inches and 90 inches along one edge of the board.

Then go back to the same end of the board where you began measuring. Mark 48 inches

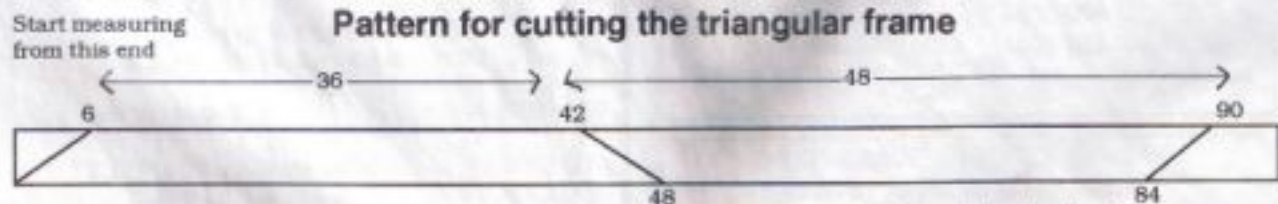


Figure 1 Measure and cut three 8 foot boards as illustrated above for each shelter. Each board will yield two identical usable pieces with a long side of 48 inches and a short side of 36 inches.

Tools & Materials

Tools

Hammer
Saw - Can be done with a hand saw but a circular saw is much easier.
Yardstick or measuring tape
Pencil
Hacksaw or tin snips

Materials For One Shelter

2 pounds of 8D (8 Penny) nails
6 tie plates - 3x5" piece of flat galvanized metal with holes for nailing
4 ft angled flashing - 3 or 4" wide strip of metal creased into a 90° angle
- comes in 10 ft lengths
3 - 8 ft Wolmanized 2x4s
1 sheet 1/2" CDX plywood
2 quarts of exterior paint or stain

Optional back wall materials

1 sheet 3/8 inch exterior grade plywood (will cover 3 or 4 back walls)
If you are only building one or two shelters, it might pay to find some scrap material for the back wall.

and 84 inches. Draw lines between the marks so the board looks like Figure 1.

Cutting and Assembling

3. Cut the board with a saw. Cutting these angles won't be easy for the truly impaired, but you will probably be able to cut them well enough to make your shelter stable and good looking.

These three cuts will make four pieces; two longer ones that are the same (or close to the same), and two pieces of scrap from the ends.

4. After you cut three boards this way, you will have six big pieces. Arrange them on the ground to make two triangles.

If the cuts are not exactly accurate then move the pieces around to get the best fit. The goal is to make the most equal-sided triangle possible.

Place a tie plate over each corner where the two angled cuts come together. It is important that the plate does not protrude over the outside edge of the triangle. Hammer 5 or 6 nails into each plate.

5. Cut the half-inch plywood in half. The result will be two 4 ft. x 4 ft. squares that

will become the sides of the shelter.

6. Before attaching the walls to the triangles, paint the pieces of the shelter. Using a light color on the inside will make it easier to see the goats inside.

7. When the paint is dry, nail the walls to the triangular frames. Place the triangles a few inches from the edges of the plywood walls to provide an overhang. When placing the second side on the triangular frame, the top edges of the plywood should be touching at the roof top.

Nail through the plywood to the frame. Put six or more nails in each side.

8. Cut a 4 ft. piece of flashing with a hacksaw or tin snips. Place the flashing on top of the shelter so that it covers the peak of the roof. Nail the flashing to the plywood.

The Back Wall

A wall for one end of the shelter can be easily constructed by nailing a plywood triangle to one of the frames. Figure 3 illustrates how to cut four back walls out of a sheet of plywood. Use at least 12 nails to

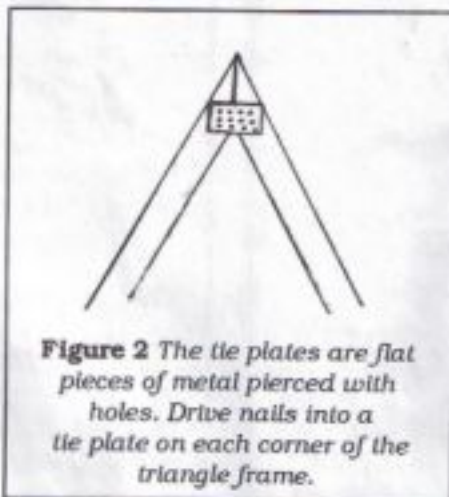


Figure 2 The tie plates are flat pieces of metal pierced with holes. Drive nails into a tie plate on each corner of the triangle frame.

attach the plywood back wall to the 2x4 frame. If the nails go through the 2x4, bend the points over so they won't scratch the goats.

You will notice that the back wall pattern makes three complete triangles and two half-triangles. The fourth wall will have to be constructed by joining the two half-triangles. The 4" strip that was cut off the end of the plywood can be used to join the two halves together.

Your shelter is now complete. If you keep the plywood painted, it will last for many years. Place the shelter so the north wind is blocked and it will make a cozy home for a doe and her kids.

Pattern For Cutting Back Walls From A Sheet Of Plywood

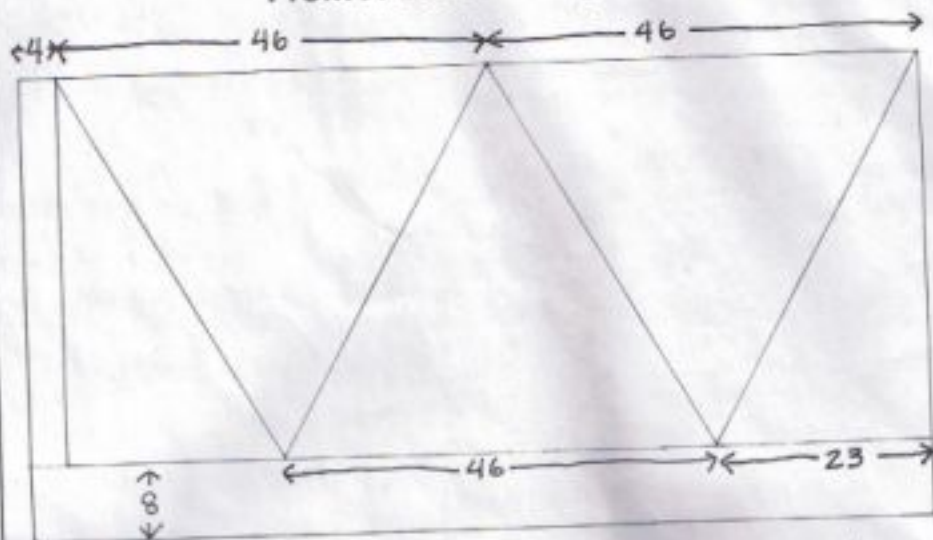


Figure 3 It is possible to make 4 back walls from a 4x8 sheet of plywood.

Please send pictures of the shelters you build to *Ruminations*. If you have designs or ideas for projects that make goatkeeping more efficient or fun, please share them too.



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