Easy-to-build dry-erase surfaces transform the working style of a space.

One of the most enduring artifacts in the d.school, the Z-Rack, is actually a modified garment rack. When outfitted with a common construction material—showerboard—the Z-Rack becomes a deployable dry-erase surface. This model is a fraction of the cost of a typical rolling dry-erase board, super-sturdy, easy to build, and large enough to act as a partition in the work space. The Z-Rack is great for subdividing large areas and creating differently scaled team work spaces.

**build instructions**

**writing surface construction**

Create a sandwich of showerboard panels laminated to a center panel of 1/8"-thick foamboard or 1/4" plywood. The result will be a dual-sided, rigid surface. It can be tricky to balance overall panel stiffness with weight—the center panel should be as stiff & light as possible.

**writing surface attachment**

Attach the writing surface to the Z-Rack frame using perforated galvanized steel strapping. Drill through-holes in the writing surface and attach at the two top & two bottom corners along the horizontal rails.

**showerboard or tileboard**

The surface of this standard construction material works very well as an inexpensive and hackable alternative to commercially produced dry-erase surfaces. Eventually the surface will start to show residue and “ghosting”; water and a towel work surprisingly well for cleaning!

**sourcing**

- **garment (“Z”) racks**
  The d.school has used the 6’ tall double-rail Z-Racks with 4’- and 5’-long bases; locking casters are available at additional cost.
  Sean James Enterprises, Inc. (425 Tribble Gap Road, Cumming, GA 30040; 888 866-9826; www.garmentrack.com)

- **showerboard**
  Showerboard is available at most home centers and local lumber suppliers.
  Pine Cone Lumber (895 East Evelyn Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086; 408 736-5491; www.pineconelumber.com)

- **foamboard**
  Arch Supplies (99 Missouri, San Francisco, CA 94107; 415 433-2724; www.archsupplies.com)

- **ULINE Shipping Supply Specialists**
  (800 958-5463; www.uline.com)

- **casters**
  California Caster and Hand Truck Company (1400 17th Street, San Francisco, CA 94107; 800 950-8750; www.californiacaster.com)

**hardware**

- Perforated steel strapping and flexible steel “tape” are available at local hardware stores and home centers.
  McMaster-Carr (600 North County Line Road, Elmhurst, IL 60126; 630 600-3600; www.mcmaster.com)

**see also**

- Tools_HACK: Showerboard Dry-Erase Surface
- Tools_Whiteboard Sliders
- Tools_Writable Surfaces Everywhere