

# Construction connectors.

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Most of you are aware that metal connectors are often used to hold things together in a house, much more than in the good old days. The most common one that most people can see in relatively new basements, even decks, is the joist hanger you see in the second photo. Rather than having to sit the joist on a ledge and toenail it to keep it in place, we can now actually hang the joist on the side of a beam, saving lots of vertical space, and that saves money.

The reality is that there are hundreds of different speciality "connectors", something for just about any imaginable need. Stop and browse a bit the next time you are at the renovation centre. You may discover a piece of hardware that could help in your next job.

Of special interest to people building decks are the adjustable beam holders, that can actually be screwed up and down. One tip if you are going to sink hardware into concrete pillars and then attach beams to the top, it is almost impossible to line them up by eye. The best thing to do is to attach the beam to the hardware and temporarily brace it into place with the connector floating over the empty Sono tube. Then pour the concrete. That will have every connector in exactly the right place and perfectly in line for the beam, because the beam is already attached. When the concrete is set, remove the temporary bracing.

One other tip is that when a nail or screw goes through the holes in these connectors, it must completely fill the hole to give the planned strength. Simpson even makes special short fat nails designed specifically for some of these connectors. Other ones are designed to have the nails enter at a specific angle for maximum strength, as with the joist hangers. Check the instructions at the renovation centre before banging away with just any nails.

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