



Photo and materials courtesy of CULTURED STONE CORPORATION

**Find the square footage** of veneer stone required for your project by multiplying the length by the height of the area. Subtract the square footage of window and door openings and corner pieces. One linear foot of corner pieces covers approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$

of a square foot of flat area, so you can reduce the square footage of flat stone required by  $\frac{1}{4}$  sq. ft. for each linear foot of inside or outside corner. It's best to increase your estimate by 5 to 10 percent to allow for trimming.

## Finishing Walls with Veneer Stone

If you want the look of stone on your house without the rigors of cutting and moving heavy materials, veneer stone is ideal. Two types of veneer are available. One is natural stone that has been cut into thin pieces designed for finishing walls, hearths, and other surfaces. The other is made from concrete that's molded and tinted to look like natural stone, but it's even lighter and easier to apply to these surfaces.

Whether you use natural or manufactured veneer, wet each stone, then apply mortar to the back before pressing it onto the mortared wall. Wetting and mortaring a stone (called parging) results in maximum adhesion between the stone and the wall. The challenge is to arrange the stones so that large and small stones and various hues and shapes alternate across the span of the wall.

This project is designed for installing veneer stone over plywood sheathing, which has the strength to support layers of building paper, lath, and veneer. If your walls are covered with

fiberboard or any other type of sheathing, ask the veneer manufacturer for recommendations.

Note: Installing from the top down makes cleanup easier since it reduces the amount of splatter on preceding courses. However, manufacturers advise bottom-up installation for some veneers. Read the manufacturer's guidelines carefully before you begin.

### Everything You Need

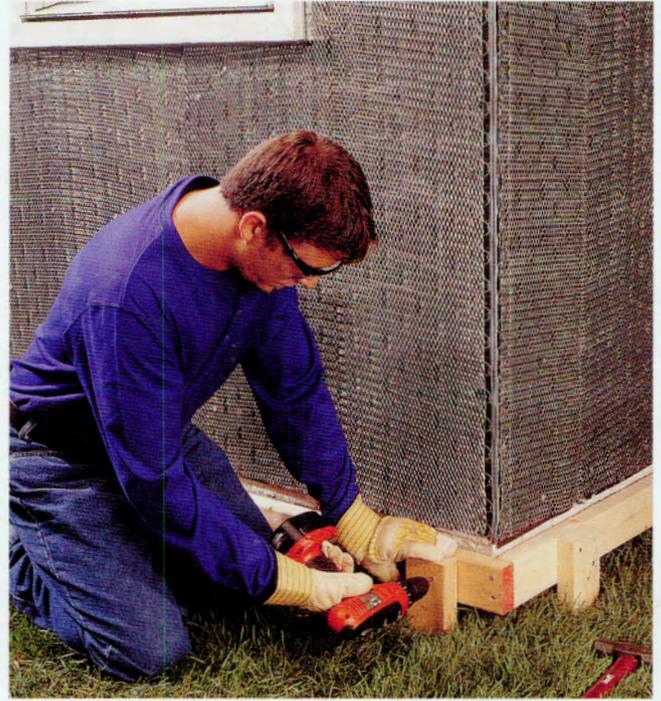
**Tools:** hammer or staple gun, drill, wheelbarrow, hoe, square-end trowel, circular saw, wide-mouth nippers or mason's hammer, dust mask, level, jointing tool, mortar bag, spray bottle, whisk broom.

**Materials:** Type M mortar mix, mortar tint (optional), 15# building paper, expanded galvanized metal lath (diamond mesh, minimum 2.5#), 1½" (minimum) galvanized roofing nails or heavy-duty staples, 2 × 4 lumber.

## How to Finish Walls with Stone Veneer



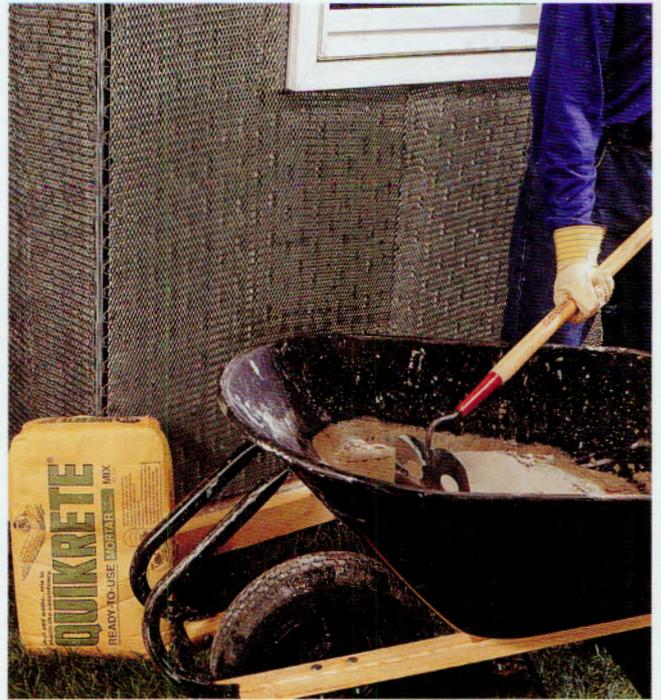
**1** Cover the wall with building paper, overlapping seams by 4". Nail or staple lath every 6" into the wall studs and midway between studs. Nails or staples should penetrate 1" into the studs. Paper and lath must extend at least 16" around corners where veneer is installed.



**2** Stake a level 2 x 4 against the foundation as a temporary ledger to keep the bottom edge of the veneer 4" above grade. The gap between the bottom course and the ground will reduce staining of the veneer by plants and soil.



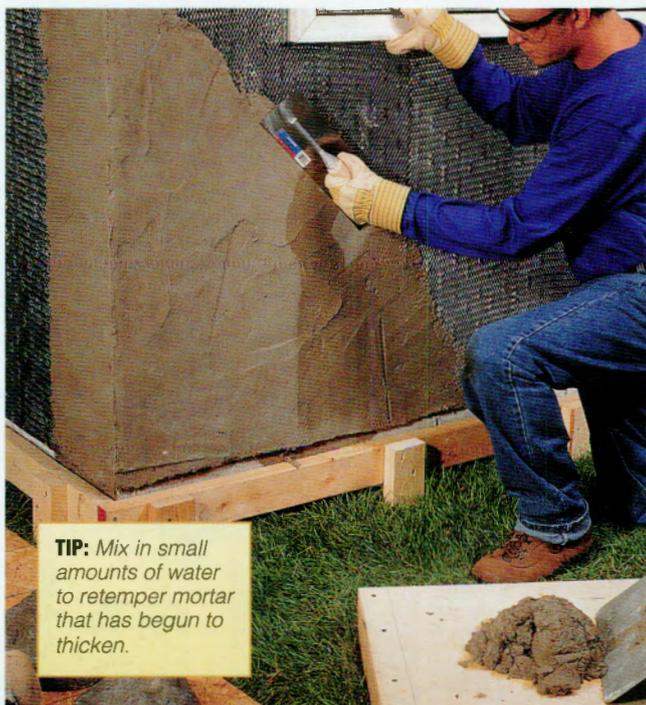
**3** Spread out the materials on the ground so you can select pieces of varying size, shape, and color, and create contrast in the overall appearance. Alternate the use of large and small, heavily textured and smooth, and thick and thin pieces.



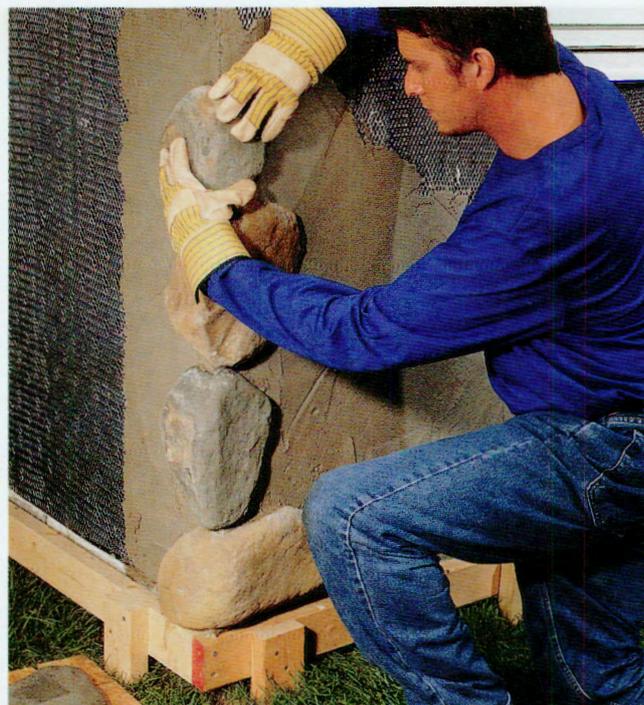
**4** Mix a batch of Type M mortar that's firm, but still moist. Mortar that's too dry or too wet is hard to work with and may fail to bond properly.

(continued on next page)

## How to Finish Walls with Stone Veneer (continued)



**5** Use a square-end trowel to press a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " layer of mortar into the lath. To ensure that mortar doesn't set up too quickly, start with a 5 sq. ft. area. Once you determine your pace, you can mortar larger areas.



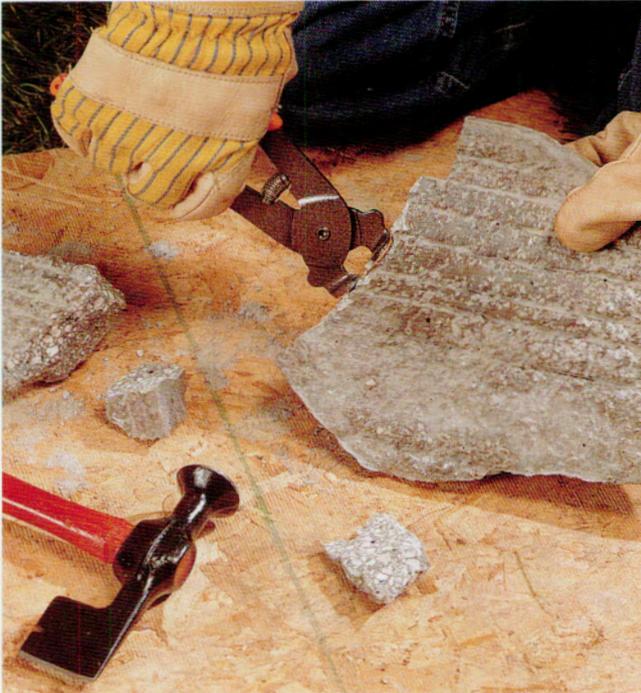
**6** Install corner pieces first, alternating long and short legs. Wet and parge each piece, then press it firmly against the freshly mortared wall so some mortar squeezes out. Joints between stones should be no wider than  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and should remain as consistent as possible across the wall.



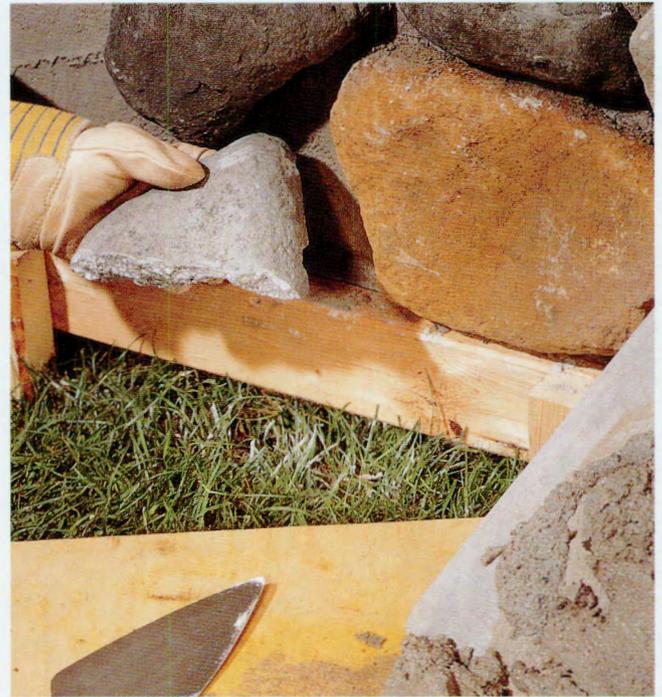
**7** Once the corner pieces are in place, install flat pieces, working from the corner toward the center of the wall.



**8** If mortar becomes smeared on a stone, remove it with a whisk broom or soft-bristle brush after the mortar has begun to dry. Never use a wire brush or a wet brush of any kind.



**9** Use wide-mouth nippers or a mason's hammer to trim and shape pieces to fit. Do your best to limit trimming so each piece retains its natural look.



**10** You can hide cut edges that are well above or below eye level simply by rotating a stone. If an edge remains visible, use mortar to cover. Let the mortar cure for 24 hours, then remove the 2 x 4 and stakes, taking care not to dislodge any stones.



**11** Once the wall is covered in veneer, fill in the joints, using a mortar bag and tuck-pointing mortar. Take extra care to avoid smearing the mortar. You can tint the tuck-pointing mortar to complement the veneer.



**12** Smooth the joints with a jointing tool once the mortar is firm. Once the mortar is dry to the touch, use a dry whisk broom to remove loose mortar—water or chemicals can leave permanent stains.