

d.school z-rack

ec ht:3
prototype

One of the most enduring artifacts in the d.school, the “z-rack,” is actually a modified garment rack. When outfitted with common construction surfacing--shower or tile board--the z-rack functions as a deployable dry-erase surface. The deployability and overall maneuverability allows the z-rack to function as a physical partition in addition to a writing surface. The latter function is valuable for subdividing large areas as well as creating differently scaled team workspaces.

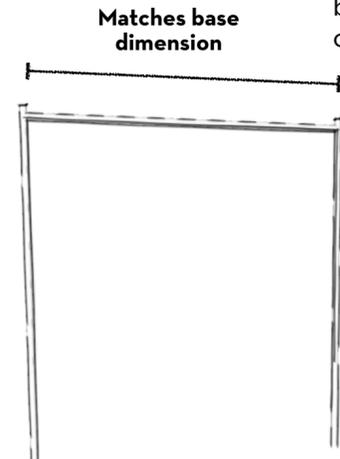
The garment rack “hack” created a tool at a fraction of the cost of similar commercially available products while simultaneously building new capacities for controlling the design of environments.

Frame Components:

Each Z-rack has several basic components:

- 1.) Horizontal rails
- 2.) Vertical rails
- 3.) Z-base
- 4.) Casters
- 5.) Writing Surface

Widths greater than 5' become unwieldy; less than 5' cuts usable space.



6' verticals

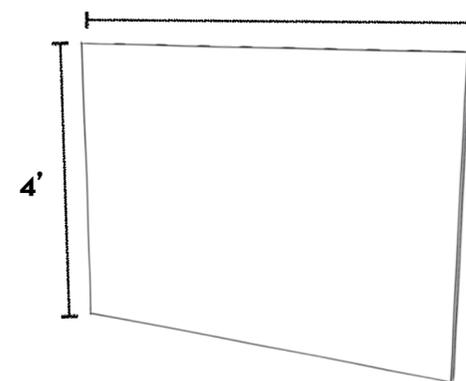
We have found 6'-6" to be the MAXIMUM height to balance usability for most sizes of people; optimizing usable space; and creating a non-intimidating surface.

Don't forget the bottom horizontal! This is often not included with a standard rack setup.

Standard garment rack base -- "Z"-shaped for nesting.

Heavy-duty casters. Seriously... the most robust you can find and afford.

5'
(to match the Z-rack dimension)



“Showerboard” or “Tileboard”:

The surface of this standard construction material works very well as an inexpensive and hackable option 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:

We have made best attempts to establish relationships with local vendors. In some cases they are also regional/national distributors, so if you are outside of the SF-Bay Area, they may still be able to provide products.

Garment (“Z”) racks:

Sean James Enterprises, Inc., 425 Tribble Gap Road, Cumming, GA 30040 // 888-866-9826 // www.garmentrack.com
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

Casters:

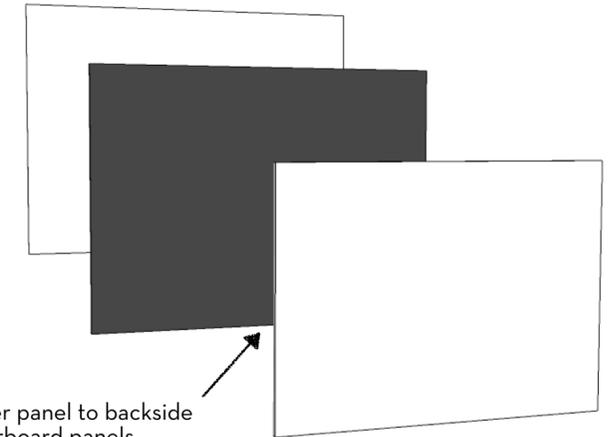
Industrial Caster & Wheel Co., 2200 Carden St., San Leandro, CA 94577-2247 // (510) 569-8303
Contact: MATT or BRIAN & reference the “3” Stanford Caster” (a metal frame with a red wheel; 3” or 5” height); casters should not have a mounting plate

Showerboard / lumber:

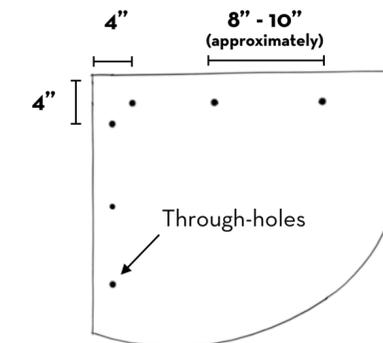
Pine Cone Lumber, 895 East Evelyn Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086-6532 // (408) 736-5491 // www.pineconelumber.com
Contact: JUNO & reference “solid white tileboard” or “showerboard” -- they are familiar with how the d.school uses the material

Writing surface construction:

In order to make a dual-sided, rigid surface, the showerboard panels can be laminated to a single sheet of 1/2” foamboard or other sheet material such as 1/4”-thick plywood. It can be tricky to balance overall panel stiffness while not making the assembly overly heavy: the centerpiece should be as stiff & light as possible.



Glue the center panel to backside of both showerboard panels. Standard wood glue works well.

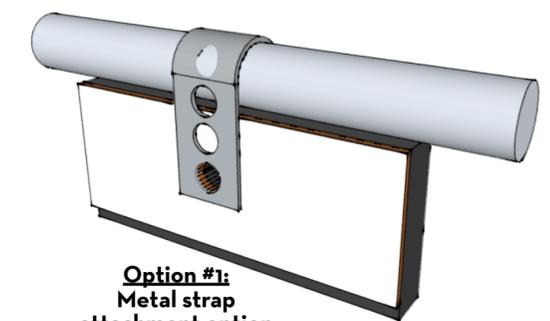


Option #2:
Zip-tie
attachment option

Writing surface attachment:

The writing surface can be attached to the Z-rack frame using perforated galvanized steel strapping. Drill through-holes in the surface and attach at the (2) top & (2) bottom corners along the horizontal rails.

The surfaces can be attached using plastic “zip-ties,” as well. Zip-tie hole @ 8” spacings.



Option #1:
Metal strap
attachment option