



# The Best-Laid Plans

Remember the Rubble with a Renovation Scrapbook  
by Adrian Van Allen | Photo James Chiang

To document a vacation, Martha suggests an album made from a simple three-ring binder and plastic sleeves. But the journey I'm beginning involves tears and dirt, not cocktails on a beach somewhere: I'm about to start tearing apart my home and putting it back together again. And doing much of the work myself means I can document the process every step of the way. But plastic sleeves? How undignified. I prefer the more classic archival paper. I'll paste in "before" and "after" beauty shots, inspirational pictures torn from magazines, and early sketches, then bind the whole thing together with bolts—another self-made construction to show off to disbelieving guests.

**SCRAPBOOK**

**\$15**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 8 1/2" x 11" black or white paper
- 5 9 3/4" x 8 1/2" cardboard pieces
- 2 11" x 17" sheets of paper, printed with blueprints
- 2 1/8" bolts
- 2 1/8" nuts
- 2 1/2" washers
- Label for album (optional)
- Photo corners (optional)

**TOOLS:**

- Glue stick or white glue
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Hole punch

## MAKE IT

1. Measure an 8 1/2" x 8 1/2" square on two pieces of cardboard, flush with three edges. 2. Using a pencil and a ruler, score the resulting line [the leftover space should be a long, narrow rectangle]. Go over it several times, then bend it over and back. This is the hinge of your cover. 3. Lay out a piece of 11" x 17" paper facedown, and spread a thin layer of glue over it. Place one of the cardboard covers in the center and fold the paper over the corners, gluing them firmly in place. Flip it over and rub the top with the back of a spoon to make sure it's smoothly and evenly glued. 4. Repeat for the other cover. 5. Measure in 1 1/4" from the short edge of an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper and mark with a pencil. Fold along that line and glue it down so the paper now measures 9 1/4" long. Make a stack of these—they're your album pages. 6. Take your last piece of cardboard, and measure in 2" from the

top and bottom edges and 5/8" from one of the short edges. At the two points where these lines intersect, punch out a hole. 7. Use this template to trace hole-punch locations on both covers and on all of your pages (on the folded edge). Keep it around in case you want to add more pages later. 8. Punch holes through your covers and pages. 9. Now it's time for assembly. Make a sandwich of the pages between your two covers, and put it on the edge of a table such that the lined-up holes are accessible. Place something heavy on top (an encyclopedia, your overfed cat). 10. Thread each bolt with a washer and slide them through the holes. Place nuts on the bolt ends and tighten. 11. Glue your label to the front and fill the pages with sketches, photos, and progress reports. If you get carried away and fill all the pages, just unscrew the nuts, and add more paper (there are always longer bolts).

