15 Begin the second course with a half block. Start by marking the centerline on all four sides using a soft-lead pencil.
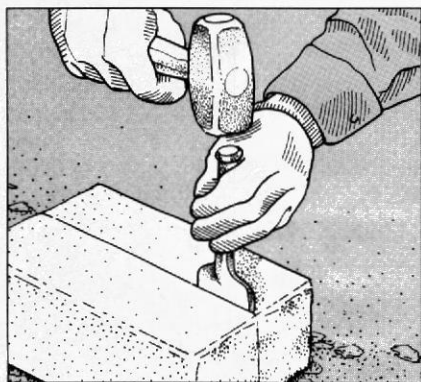
centerline of the block on all four surfaces (Fig. 15). Then draw centerlines between these marks using a straightedge and a soft-lead pencil (Fig. 16).

Once all the lines are drawn on the

16 Draw the centerline around the block using a pencil and framing square. For the best results, accuracy is important.

block, score each with a mason's chisel and a mechanics hammer (Fig. 17) or a ball-peen hammer. Remember to always wear eye protection when cutting these blocks because the concrete chips can fly
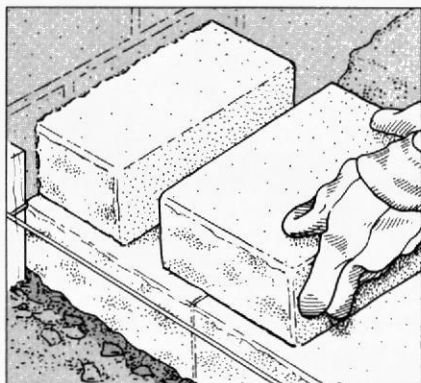

17 Using a mechanics hammer and mason's chisel, score all the cutlines. Then break the block in half with a single blow.

in totally unpredictable directions.

With all four edges scored, simply strike the block along the scored line and it should break. The process does take a little practice, and along the way you can end up ruining quite a few blocks before you finally get the hang of it. But eventually, the cutting goes quickly.

Once the half block is cut, slide it in place, making sure that the bottom retaining lip bears fully on the upper
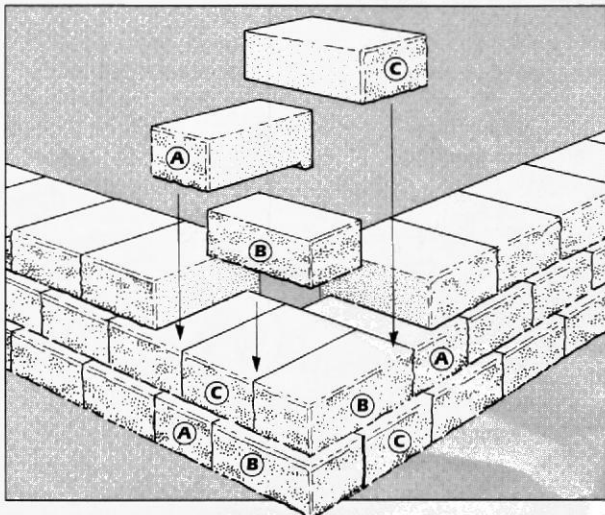

18 Slide the half block in place, making sure its lip bears fully against the beveled edge of the block below.

beveled edge of the blocks in the first course. Then continue adding the remaining blocks to the second course (Fig. 18).

Finishing up

With all the blocks in place, backfill the trench, both in front of the blocks and behind them, with more gravel or stone (Fig. 19). Tamp the fill firmly in place (Fig. 20), and then add some topsoil to the front of the wall so the grass will grow. Also fill behind the wall, preferably with soil that has a lot of stone or gravel in it. The more stone and gravel, the
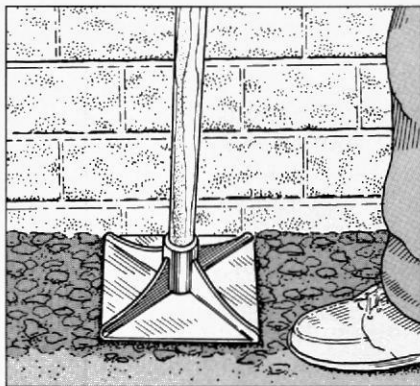
21 Getting the best finished appearance on outside corners takes a little work. For each course, three blocks must be cut. Begin by cutting blocks A and B into ¾ units. Place A in the normal block position against the last course block. Then remove the bottom lip from block B and place it at the corner of the course. Finally, take a full block (C) and remove enough of the lip so the block will fit properly in the space remaining. Alternate the position of these blocks on ensuing courses.

19 Once blocks are installed, lock the first two courses in place by filling the trench in front and back with crushed stone.

better your drainage and the less likely that the drainage spaces between the blocks will clog.

On this job we just built a couple of straight walls to solve an erosion problem. But if you need to make an

20 Firmly tamp the crushed stone in place and cover it with topsoil. Then add backfill behind the wall, tamping as you go.

outside corner in your wall, the process is simple (Fig. 21). Just make sure to stagger the corner blocks in each course. **PM**