

WOODWORKING GUIDE BOOK

A Balanced Approach To Your First Woodworking Tools



Woodworking Guide

A Balanced Approach To Your First Woodworking Tools

Copyright © 2020

All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

The author and publisher have provided this e-book to you for your personal use only. You may not make this e-book publicly available in any way. Copyright infringement is against the law. If you believe the copy of this e-book you are reading infringes on the author's copyright, please notify the publisher at: <https://us.macmillan.com/piracy>.

Contents

A Woodworking bench buying guide	3
Hammers buying guide	12
Woodworking chisels buying guide.....	22
Woodworking clamps buying guide	32
Wood level buying guide.....	43

A Woodworking bench buying guide





Choosing a woodworking bench can be a tricky business as there are many important factors you have to consider. If choosing a bench randomly, you might easily end up with a bench that won't work for your workplace nor the needs of your projects.

From measurements to material, before heading out to find the perfect fit make sure you are fully aware of the characteristics you require from the woodworking bench. Here's a breakdown to 4 most important factors that you should keep in mind when buying a woodworking bench.

1. Work Surface Measurements

A work bench that is too low or too high can be a pain to work at. If the bench is too low, you'll have to hunker over to reach down to it. If it's too high, you'll have to hold your arms higher than is comfortable. Therefore, it is crucial to make sure that your bench, tools and machines are at a comfortable height.

To figure out the right height, stand upright with your arms hanging relaxed next to your sides. Measure from the floor to anywhere in your palm, that's the height you're looking for in a work bench. A bench in that height range will be comfortable to work at.

When it comes to woodworking benches, the length can never be too long, as long as it will fit in your workshop. On the other hand, woodworking benches can be too wide. Anything over 3 feet wide is really too much.

If a 3-foot bench is located against a wall, the last foot of width is pretty well wasted, as it's too far to reach comfortably. What about hanging tools on the wall behind the bench? There's no way to reach them with an overly wide work bench.

18" – 24" wide benches are great sizes to work at, being wide enough but without being too wide.

2. Work Surface Material

The work surface of a woodworking bench can be pretty much anything, as long as it's flat and stout. Flatness is probably the most important aspect, as a warped work surface will cause issues. Heavy work surfaces can take a beating and provide mass when hand nailing projects.

Have you ever tried to hand nail on a flimsy surface? Flimsy surfaces flex under the hammer blow which lessens the force on the nail. This makes it harder to drive nails.

Look for a woodworking bench design that has a thick work surface made of dense material. Such a surface will last a long time and provide great support when hand nailing.

3. Work Surface Overhang

A woodworking bench must have overhang on the front and ends, especially if it doesn't have woodworking vises. How else are you

going to clamp work down so that it won't move when you don't want it to?

Speaking of clamping, it is often said that the work bench must have woodworking vises mounted on the end and front edge. This is not entirely true as you can definitely work without vises if you have a decent woodworking bench with overhang.

Vises are handy though, so if the design has vises, all the better for you!

4. Strong Frame and Leg Structure

Here's another area where more is better than less. Your workbench needs to have a ridged frame and strong legs. There's nothing worse than trying to hand plane a piece of wood when the bench racks back and forth.

Look for a sturdy design that has some heft to it and you won't have any troubles!

After you've established the key factors important for finding the best woodworking bench for you, you have the one last important choice to make: choose the most fitting one.

We are currently reviewing 3 of the finest woodworking benches out there for a beginner woodworker, all of which are alike when it comes to their durability but have slight differences in price, measurements and extra elements that make the particular bench stand out.

If you haven't made up your mind yet, read this breakdown which will definitely help you choose the best woodworking bench for the money.

Sjobergs Hobby SJO-33281 Hobby Plus Bench



Sjobergs' woodworking benches are recognized all over the world for their durability, handy design and extra features that make these benches well worth the money. This Hobby Plus bench is the perfect fit for a woodworking enthusiast, especially since it is equipped with two vices and bench dogs. This could become your one and only woodworking station!

The Sjobergs' bench is the highest in price in the selection but it doesn't necessarily mean it's expensive. Quite contrary, the price for this woodworking bench is affordable for any budget if you are looking for true quality.

Measurements

The model is made to fit for a beginner woodworker, therefore it has compact measurements that allow you to work efficiently even if your workshop has limited space, yet again it's not too small and can cover the needs you have for small to medium sized woodworking projects.

The key dimensions: – Length of worktop: 52-3/4” (1340 mm)-
Total length: 57-7/8” (1470 mm)- Width of worktop: 5/8” (500 mm)
– Total width: 24-3/4” (630 mm)- Working height: 32-9/32” (820 mm)

Frame & Material

The bench is made of hard Nordic birch and the frame is built for a long life with normal use. Holdfast clamps can be used in the top and in the trestle legs. The top includes 2 double rows of bench dog holes and 4 unbreakable spring-loaded bench dogs are included.

The top also features woodworking vises at the end and the front edge. The front vise can be set up for left or right-handed woodworkers. The trestle style construction of the base prevents racking and provides for a very sturdy work bench.

Conclusion

The Sjobergs Hobby model is worth every penny invested in it. Sturdy Nordic birch frame, 2 vices and bench dogs are more than enough to cover your needs. If you have limited space in your workshop but you want the best there is, then this is easily the pick for you!

If you are a bit more advanced, you can also customize the bench the way it fits your needs as the bench comes without a finish, hence you can customize it and make it perfect for you!

Grizzly H7724 Birch Workbench With Drawers



This workbench is almost like a dream-come-true for any beginner woodworker who doesn't have loads of storing space. The beautiful handy design packs 6 drawers and 2 drop-door storage units which is more than you'd ever ask from a workspace!

The Grizzly workbench is in the same price range as Sjobergs but provides much more than just a workspace – it is a great storing cabinet with extra gadgets that all great workbenches must have. Therefore, it is fairly priced and it is a money-saver thanks to the extra space it provides you!

Measurements

You could guess the bench is pretty huge in measurements when it

has such a storing capacity. That's not the case here as the Grizzly woodworking bench model is in fact very compact in size and will fit your workshop nicely! Also, it is a bit bigger in length than Sjobergs' model so it might be handier in the long-run.

The key dimensions: – Length of worktop: 60"- Total length: 66"- Width of worktop: 20"- Total width: 20"- Working height: 34"

Frame & Material

Grizzly workbench is almost perfect in every aspect and similarly to other high-quality workbenches, it is crafted from birch. It is constructed in Trestle style and features an end woodworking vise. The Trestle style base will provide a sturdy foundation for working on your projects.

There are no bench dog holes in the top, however it won't likely be a problem as there are easy ways to work around not having those. On the plus side, no bench dog holes means no debris will drop into the top drawers.

Conclusion

The Grizzly birch woodworking bench is our top recommendation as it is not only handy in size, it features massive storing capacity which is always a perk for a woodworker – you can never have too many storing cabinets.

Thanks to the sturdy hardwood base and compact measurements, it is a reliable asset that will help you out for the years to come. No matter if you are a beginner or more advanced, this versatile workspace will make your life a lot easier and considering the price, it is one heck of a good deal!

Windsor Design Workbench With 4 Drawers



The Windsor Design workbench is yet another great choice for a hobby woodworker. The bench features 4 felt-lined drawers and 2 double rows of bench dog holes with both metal and wood bench dogs included.

This bench is the cheapest of the bunch and therefore, it might be the best fit for a limited budget. Though low cost, it matches up to the quality of the other higher priced versions having hardwood frame and even a couple of drawers to assist with storing.

Measurements

The bench is surprisingly big for the money and has a decent worktop size – big enough to be comfortable even when working on some bigger projects. Thanks to the compact design it fit easily to your workshop. The key dimensions: – Length of worktop: 60" - Total

length: approx. 64"- Width of worktop: 20-1/8"- Total width: 20"-
Working height: 33-1/4"

Frame & Material

The bench appears to be constructed from Obeche hardwood which is another sturdy material for long-lasting construction. The top includes 2 double rows of bench dog holes and wood and metal bench dogs are included.

There is also a woodworking vise at the end and should you want to, you can possibly install a front mounted vise. The four drawers provide handy storage for hand tools like screwdrivers, hand planes and supplies, the trestle style construction of the base prevents racking and provides for a very sturdy workbench.

Conclusion

All-in-all, the Windsor Design workbench is a nice companion, especially if your budget is limited. It is not as deeply designed and perfected as the other two benches, as there is only one vice, the bench dog holes are drilled through the surface (allowing debris to fall to the top drawers) and the drawers can be a little flimsy if you are not using glue for assembling it, but for the price they offer, there are plenty of perks.

Hammers buying guide



In simplicity, hammers are for driving and pulling nails, whereas mallets are for striking other things, such as carving tools or part of a project to seat it into a snug fitting joint. Setting wooden joints with a hammer can be done, but only with a block of wood between it and the wood you're striking. No need to leave a hammer face dent in that nice project, huh?

With that said, let's take a closer look at the anatomy of carpentry hammers and woodworking mallets. Both are very similar so they share a number of characteristics.

Hammers

Framing hammers are generally used for construction framing and demolition work, as they are heavier and have longer handles than finishing hammers. Many framing hammers also have a milled face whereas finishing hammers do not. The hatch-patterned surface is designed to grip the head of framing nails to prevent deflection. A framing hammer is not suitable for general work, due to the added weight and course face.

Finishing/trim hammers are generally lighter and have shorter handles than framing hammers. They also have smooth faces, so as to not mar the wood when setting finishing nails. It's in the hammer owner's best interest to keep the face of a finishing hammer clean and smooth. It's very frustrating to try to nail with a finishing hammer that has a flawed face as the hammer will tend to slide or deflect off the head of the nail.

Like the faces of framing and finishing/trim hammer, the claws are usually different, too. The claw on framing hammers tends to have less curve than finishing/trim hammer. This flatter claw makes the hammer handy for clawing nailed boards apart. Finishing/trim hammers have a tighter curved claw which is primarily used for pulling nails.

Mallets

There are numerous styles of mallets, intended for numerous tasks.

Rubber headed mallets are used for shifting parts, or driving them home. Rubber mallets can be used in woodworking, as well as in automotive work. It's common practice to seat a wheel cover with a rubber mallet. Don't strike sharp objects with a rubber mallet as it will gouge the head.

Plastic headed mallets are used for shifting parts, adjusting the angle of a hand plane, driving parts into holes or cut joints, as well as a myriad of other tasks. Many plastic headed mallets have two types of head materials, a hard plastic head and a soft plastic head are common.

Carving mallets come in two basic styles and are used only for tapping on the anvil end of carving tools and chisels. Many woodworkers prefer the "potato masher" shaped carving mallet over the sledge shaped carving mallet. Carving mallets are available in

wood and composite materials.

Dead blow mallets are designed to eliminate bounce back when setting stubborn parts. These mallets have hollow heads that are filled with metal shot. When the mallet hits home, the shot slings forward, thus dampening the mallet's tendency to bounce back. Dead blow mallets are only to be used on flat or almost flat surfaces, so as to prevent piercing the face and losing the shot.

What To Look For In A Good Hammer

Though hammer and mallet are intended for different uses, they share some traits that have to be considered when looking for a reliable carpentry hammer or woodworking mallet.

Take a closer look at the 2 factors that determine what makes a hammer or a mallet a good one.

Head

Both hammers and mallets have striking surfaces, known as the face. A carpentry hammer has one striking face, where mallets have two, one on each end of the head. The sides of the heads are known as cheeks and the hole in which the handle is mounted is known as the eye. Carpentry hammers have a claw, for pulling nails, at the end of the head opposite of the face. Framing hammers tend to have a flatter bend in the claw than do finishing or trim hammers.

Hammers are designated by the weight of the head. Sixteen to twenty-ounce hammers will serve well in DIY work. The 16-ounce hammer is good for trim work with the 20-ounce hammer better for demolition or framing work.

The key decision to make when buying a hammer is to not buy one that's too heavy for the user. Too heavy a hammer will tire the user. Too light a hammer and nails will not be driven efficiently.

Handle

Hammer handles come in three material types; old-school wood (most commonly Hickory), composite (plastic or resin based), or metal.

Wood handles have served well for centuries and can last for years if taken care of. Wood handles can easily be replaced if necessary and absorb shock and vibration, cushioning the user's hand and arm. When buying a wood handle hammer, look for a crack free handle. No one needs a new hammer that will break after the first couple of nails.

Composite handles are generally molded into the hammer's head and cannot be easily replaced. Like wood handles, composite handles also absorb shock and vibration. Whereas wood handles tend to be straight, composite handles can be formed in ergonomic shapes that lessen the strain on the woodworker's wrist.

Metal handles are generally forged as part of the entire hammer. These tend to be heavier and do not absorb shock and vibration as wood and composite handle hammer. Metal handle hammers are unquestionably the strongest of the three handle styles. Metal handles can also be formed in ergonomic shapes, similar to composite handles.

Non-metal headed mallets tend to use wood or composite for handles, whereas metal headed mallets can be purchased with wood, composite, or metal handles.

The length of a hammer or mallet's handle will affect the force of each blow. The longer the handle, the greater the force as the hammer head will swing faster than a shorter handled tool. Short handles are great for precise light blow work, so it's wise to buy accordingly.

Stanley 51-624 20-Ounce Rip Claw Fiberglass Hammer



As the name implies, this hammer has a fiberglass handle and a head weight of 20 ounces. It's a framing hammer with a rip claw, which is not as curved as a finishing/trim hammer. This hammer will serve well driving framing nails, as well as tearing stuff apart.

Price

Though hammers are not really high-priced tools, there is still a bit of a difference. This Stanley classy hammer is one of the cheapest of the bunch, therefore it is not even a doubt whether you should get this one for your toolbox! The price for such a high quality tool is more than great.

Head

The hammer is heat treated and made of stainless steel. As a one-piece rip claw hammer it is durable and you won't be having problems with breaking the head – it can't happen that easily.

Though the head can seem as too little for its' overall size, the size ratio between the head and handle adds a weight benefit as it feels lightweight and stable, therefore it is comfortable to swing it.

Handle

The handle of this Stanley hammer is the most remarkable perk. It's made of fiberglass which absorbs vibration and shock while the

rubber grip provides comfortable gripping – no need to worry about sweaty hands causing the hammer to slip.

Another great addition is the yellow color on the handle – though a very small design perk, it helps to locate the hammer much easier on your workplace. Who hasn't lost a hammer because of its' neutral, dark color? You won't have that problem with this Stanley model!

Conclusion

In case you are looking for something smaller, the model comes in sizes from 7 to 20 ounces so you have plenty of options. Thanks to the fiberglass handle and sturdy stainless steel build, it is a reliable asset.

It might not be the best fit for finishing and trimming works but thanks to the weight and build, it is a perfect choice for framing nails.

Estwing E3-16S 16 oz Straight Claw Hammer



Estwing hammers are available from 12 to 22 ounces – the 16 ounce one is a nice “middle man” for all around work. The one-piece head and handle combination with rubber grip provides comfort and confidence in swinging the hammer.

Price

The 16 ounce model is one of the most affordable versions as it is the most common size. For the price, there is more than plenty of a tool: if you are looking for a hammer with a good price and high quality, this is the right one.

Head

For extra strength, the hammer has a forged solid steel head that is

fully polished, alike the handle – its' one-piece design and straight claw are designed to pull nails easily. The smooth-faced head is not only durable but has light weight and the nice balance between the weight of the head and the handle guarantees this will become your favourite hammer.

Handle

The most extraordinary part of this hammer is the handle which has a molded Shock Reduction Grip, proven to reduce the shock up to 70%, hence it is safe to say it is one of the safest hammers available.

Additionally, you can benefit from its' nylon-vinyl deep cushion grip and one-piece design which means you won't have to worry about the head flying off while ripping.

Conclusion

If you are looking for a hammer that can last a lifetime, then this is the hammer to choose. Sturdy design, lightweight structure and supreme materials combined make for a top-notch product that is not only reliable but comfortable to use. Thanks to Estwing's unique shock reduction molding, it is a safe tool and nice to work with on a daily basis.

TEKTON 30653 White Rubber Mallet



This double-faced, non-marking solid white rubber head mallet is great for “motivating” joints to go together as they should. The high strength composite handle provides shock absorption, lessening strain on the users arm. This mallet is handy for construction, woodworking, metal working, and automotive working.

Price

The price range of mallets can vary quite much, so you will be happy to hear this white rubber mallet is a low-priced model. With such a good price, it’s a must-have tool in your workshop!

Head

This rubber mallet model is especially unique because of the specially

formulated white rubber compound that won't leave black marks on the surface contrary to black rubber mallets that can easily leave marks on light wood.

Solid rubber head gives a softer blow, therefore it is safe to use even with more delicate parts and finishes. With this white woodworking mallet you won't need to worry about messing up a sensitive surface – that's what this mallet is made for!

Handle

Similarly to the framing hammers, this mallet has a lightweight fiberglass handle which will absorb the vibration and keep you safe. The poly jacket protects the core of the handle and absorbs any impact when missing a strike.

Moreover, it is equipped with non-slip rubber grip which guarantees the mallet won't slip from your hand while you are malleting.

Conclusion

No matter if you need a mallet for heavier work or need to fixate delicate joints, this white rubber mallet can do the trick. If you are looking for something even bigger and stronger, TEKTON has also a 32-ounce model. Affordable price and high-quality materials make it one of the best woodworking mallets out there.

Woodworking chisels buying guide



Woodworking chisels are more versatile than you could imagine. These are the main areas where you can use your chisels.

Furniture and Cabinet Projects

As mentioned earlier, chisels are used in hand worked wood joinery, specifically mentioning the Dovetail and Mortise. Both of these joints are used in furniture and cabinet making, neither being of any mass, for the most part. Chisels are great for cutting and fitting in projects of this size.

Don't have a router and a dovetail jig but want to make dovetail joints? Cut the waste out from between the tails and the pins with a saw, then use your chisels to clean the joints up for a tight fit.

Need to make a half-lap joint but don't have a table saw or router? Scribe the shoulder line with a Marking knife then use your trusty chisel to remove the waste wood.

Construction and Renovation Projects

On the other hand, chisels also come in handy in Timber Framing. Timber Framing? Yep, the way homes and barns were built YEARS

ago. Although you might find a Dovetail joint in Timber Framing, you're more likely to find Mortise and Tenon joints. Mortises of this size require a different chisel than do those in cabinet and furniture projects.

How about setting hinges in doors without the aid of a router? Layout the hinge outline with a marking knife and remove the waste with a chisel.

Other Projects

How about wooden boat building? Yep, chisels come in hand for that kind of woodworking too. Ship Lap construction techniques utilize chisels for cutting and fitting framing joints. There are many other projects out there where chisels will come in handy.

So now that you have an understanding of how chisels can come in handy let's take a look at choosing your woodworking chisels.

What To Consider When Buying Woodworking Chisels

Choosing your first woodworking chisels can be mind boggling, as there are many options to choose from. Picking the wrong chisels will provide for enjoyable woodworking, but rather frustration and strife.

To help streamline your chisel choosing, here's a breakdown of what to look for when making your selection.

1. The Right Chisel For The Right Job

The most important thing to consider when buying any woodworking tool is the purpose for which you're going to use it. A paring chisel will not serve as a general chisel as its purpose is making fine cuts. Mortise chisels also won't serve well for general chisel work.

Beveled edge bench chisels are a great first choice for the new

woodworker as they can be used for quite a number of tasks. A keenly sharp bench chisel can be used for paring but it won't allow for the same precision of work as it won't be as flexible.

Don't expect to cut narrow and deep mortises with a bench chisels unless you pre-drill the bulk of the mortise out. Then, if the mortise is wide enough, you can clean it up with a bench chisel. If you want to cut a deep narrow mortise without drilling, you'll need mortise and paring chisels.

2. Blades

Not much can be as frustrating as a cutting tool that won't hold a sharp edge without frequent sharpening. With chisels, this is SO true. Quality steel is necessary for a quality chisel.

When purchasing chisels look for an indication that the blades are made of quality steel. High carbon steel holds up well and is fairly easy to sharpen, a necessity for keeping chisel edges sharp.

A dull cutting edge will reek havoc when trying to cut wood, tearing and crushing fibers instead of shearing them. Therefore it is imperative to keep the cutting edges sharp and high carbon blades will help you do so.

The same qualities in keeping an edge sharp also come into play in providing strength in the neck of the blade. This is necessary for chisels to withstand the repetitive blows of a carving let.

3. Handle

Handles can be made of many materials; wood, plastic, leather disks, and other materials. None are necessarily better than the other. Choose what you think will be best for you, but keep in mind that balance is more important than the material the handle is made of. Chisels that are too heavy on the handle end tend to be less

comfortable to use.

The handle must be strong enough to take constant wacks from a carving mallet so look for crack free handles when buying those made from wood. Many plastic and leather handle chisels have a steel cap on the on end, thus taking transmitting the mallet force to the blade.

The Right Chisel For The Right Job

Even in buying chisels for joinery, there are things to consider. Are you planning to do timber joinery? If so, you're going to need some stout chisels, designed to take a pounding and to hog out wood.

If you're looking at cabinetry and furniture making then the chisels you're looking for won't need much mass, but they will definitely need to be balanced in fit well in your hand.

If you want to fine tune a joint with thin, precise cuts then there's a chisel for that task too. Here's a breakdown into chisels you can use in wood joinery.

Beveled Edge Bench Chisels

Beveled edge bench chisels are the most common chisel and are readily found at woodworking supply stores, in woodworkers' tool cabinets, and in their tool racks. These chisels are neither too long or too short. Comfortable fit in the woodworker's hand is a necessity.

Bench chisels should hold a keen edge and be easy to sharpen. Quality should have a flat back that allows for ease in sharpening. Beveled edge chisels get their name from their beveled edges that allow for working tight in corners of joints.

Beveled edge bench chisels are THE first choice of chisels for any

woodworker looking to perform hand joinery.

Heavy Duty Beveled Edge Chisels

Although not really used much in furniture making, these chisels are a fine choice for boat building, timber framing, or any application where the joinery is big and complicated. Although awesome chisels, these are too big and clumsy for cabinet and furniture joinery, unless you're going to make some pretty large cabinets and furniture.

Mortise Chisels

If you're going to pre-drill deep mortises then you won't need a mortise chisel. On the other hand, should you want to cut the entire chisel by hand, the mortise chisel is your tool. Mortise chisels are designed to be pounded into and then pry out wood. Bench chisels are not built for that kind of abuse.

The standard mortise chisel is designed to chisel out mortises used in furniture and cabinet work. If you're looking to chisel out a sash mortise when reworking an old wooden window, then you're going to need the narrower Sash Mortise chisel.

Paring Chisels

Paring chisels are used to make fine cuts when precisely fitting joints. These chisels are light, thin, long, and almost flexible. They are not to be driven with a mallet but instead are used only with the hand or hands. One hand provides the force for cutting and the second guides the long thin blade. Paring chisels are great for dressing the sides of mortises after the bulk of the waste is removed with a mortising chisel.

Stanley 16-791 Sweetheart 750 Series Socket Chisel Set



Stanley discontinued the 750 Series chisels more than 40 years ago, but revived the offering due to customer demand. The 750 Series chisels are manufactured in Sheffield, England, from high-carbon, chrome steel, which should provide for years of quality service. Quality chisels do not come cheaply. You know the saying, “You get what you pay for.” Well, the Stanley 750 Series offers a moderately priced, yet quality chisel. They are a great “bang for your buck.

Blade

As mentioned above, the blades are manufactured from high-carbon, chrome steel. The long blades are finely machined with clean and consistent 30° beveled edges. The backs could use some mild flattening, but for the new woodworker they should perform well.

Handle

The short and comfortable handles are made from Hornbeam Wood, a common material for chisel handles. The rounded handle ends will not dig into the woodworker’s palm when working without a mallet.

Conclusion

The Stanley 750 chisels are quality chisels, available at a reasonable price. Well made, with great form, these chisels will serve any woodworker well for years.

Narex Premium 8 pc Chisels Set With Hornbeam Handles



Narex also manufactures quality tools, garnering an excellent reputation as a tool manufacture. And where do Narex tools come from? The Czech Republic, which is not widely known for such quality offerings, but surely will in the future. This 8-piece set falls between the other two sets in price. In knowing the quality and in the

number of chisels included in this set, it's a great set for the cost.

Blade

Narex manufactures their blades from tempered chrome-manganese steel, hardened to a Rockwell hardness of 59. These finely beveled blades should provide long lasting sharp edges and quality cuts.

Handle

The Narex chisels also have Hornbeam wood handles, in a short and round shape. Narex takes their handles a little farther by offering them in a warm dark stain. These handles will be comfortable on the hands.

Conclusion

When comparing prices of each set, the Narex set offers the best cost-per-chisel value. In line with the other two manufacturers, Narex offers quality tools at reasonable prices. One can't go wrong with this set of chisels.

Two Cherries 500-1561 6-Piece Chisel Set in Wooden Box



The Two Cherries chisel set is the most expensive of these three sets, but in addition to the chisels, the set also includes a wood storage case. This set of chisels is manufactured in Germany, also from quality high-carbon steel. As mentioned earlier, this is the most costly set of chisels presented. Although more expensive they are still not out of reach for many woodworkers. Six chisels and the storage case offset the higher cost.

Blade

These long blade chisels are heated to a Rockwell hardness of 61, which will provide for a long lasting edge. The bevels are finely cut, providing for necessary clearance in fine joinery.

Handle

The Two Cherries also have Hornbeam wood handles, but of a longer and straighter shape than the Stanley 750 Series. The Two Cherries chisels also have “Hooped” handles, which refers to the metal band affixed around the striking end of the handle.

Conclusion

Although costing a bit of coin, this is a quality set of chisels that should last beyond the lifetime of the average woodworker, making for a family heirloom someday.

Woodworking clamps buying guide



Best Woodworking Clamps

The reason you see woodworkers shops littered with different types of clamps is because they're oh so very useful.

Anytime you need to glue woodworking pieces together, a clamp (or several) is usually the easiest way to hold them tight when the glue sets.

Aside from that they can be used for dry-fitting, holding parts steady when working on them, and more.

Woodworking projects vary a lot in shape and size of course, and there's been all sorts of different woodworking clamps designed to fill different uses with these variations in shape and size.

Edge Gluing

Sometimes one board is just not wide enough for a project. Need an 18" wide board for a project but only have 6" inch wide boards? Well, you grab three boards and edge glue them, using bar clamps to clamp them tight until the glue sets. This is a time-proven method for making "wide" boards and you can do it in your own woodworking

wood shop.

Face-to-face Gluing

Sometimes a wood worker needs a chunk of wood that's thicker than what's on the wood rack. Need to make a 3" thick table leg but only have 3/4" thick lumber? Face glue four boards together and you have a chunk of wood that's thick enough.

Dry-fitting Parts Before Assembly

Need to hold the four sides of a blanket chest together while marking and later drilling screw holes? Once again, clamps come to the rescue. Hey, a guy only has two hands and there's four sides, so clamps are necessary, unless you have more than 4 hands.

And if you're ever considering NOT dry-fitting, just remember this story. The lesson here is this: always dry-fit.

Holding Parts When Machining

Many times a woodworker needs to safely hold parts when drilling, sanding, etc. Some clamps excel in such tasks. Better to safely hold a piece of wood with a clamp than to have it spin in one's hand when a drill grabs it.

What To Consider When Buying Woodworking Clamps

Picking woodworking clamps doesn't have to be confusing, even with the many options to choose from. It's a matter of know what you need to do and what clamp will do the job for you.

To help facilitate your choosing the right woodworking clamp, we're going to breakdown what to look for choosing your clamps.

Woodworking Clamp Features To Consider

Although they come in many different types and sizes, woodworking

clamps are generally pretty simple contraptions. With that in mind, there aren't that many actual physical features to be considered when choose which clamps are right for you.

Aside from knowing the right type of clamp for the job (which we'll discuss in just a moment), you just need to consider the materials a clamp is made from, and the handle.

Materials

Clamps are not as glorious as hammers or chisels, so there's not as much to look for in quality other than the materials that they are made of.

Many F-clamps are made of plastic. The right plastic will last for years. Hard brittle plastic tends to crack, so look for a more flexible softer plastic.

Metal parts aren't going to take a pounding, so they don't have to be of the same hardness as chisels, but you do want to look for cracks and such that might have slipped through the quality control inspections.

Wooden parts, such as in hand screw clamps, should be of a hardwood, similar to oak or maple. If you can't determine the species, simply try to scratch the wood with a finger nail. If you can't pass that clamp on by and look for one that doesn't scratch so easily. That clamp will serve you longer than its softer counter part.

Handle

Clamp handles can be made of wood, plastic, or metal. All should hold up well for years. Check wood handles for cracks when buying.

As always, the handle should be comfortable to use. Ergonomic handles on any sort of tool are almost always a huge benefit.

The Right Clamp For The Right Job

In buying woodworking clamps, there are things to consider. If you're going to edge glue boards you'll need bar or pipe clamps. You're going to need something to reach across a number of boards and hold them flat while they are gluing up. Bar or pipe clamps also come in handy when assembling projects such as boxes and cabinets.

One can face clamp with bar clamps, but it's cumbersome to do so. Hand screw clamps or F-clamps will reach into the middle of the boards, thus reducing the number of clamps to hold the pieces together. A neat characteristic of these clamps is the ability to clamp non-parallel surfaces.

Bar or Pipe Clamps

Bar or Pipe Clamps are THE best clamp for edge clamping boards when edge gluing. They can be bought in many lengths, allowing the woodworker to glue up wide boards. Bar clamps are limited by the bar that is part of their construction, so a woodworker might need quite a selection.

Pipe clamps are basically clamps that are made by purchasing the clamp pieces and affixing them to pieces of pipe to make the clamp. By buying pipe clamp parts and various lengths of threaded pipe, the wood worker can amass quite a collection of varied length clamps since the pipes can be interchanged into the clamp parts. A 10" piece of pipe will yield a clamping dimension of about 6" inches. A 36" piece of pipe will provide a clamping length of about 32".

F-Clamps

F-clamps are similar to bar clamps in that they use a bar as the main body of the clamp. They are different in that they don't clamp close to the bar, as do bar or pipe clamps. Instead f-clamps clamping fixtures extend 2 or so inches from the bar. This allows reaching further than bar clamps can.

F-clamps are not only great for clamping wood while gluing, but also for clamping wood to the bench to hold it while sanding or carving. They are also great for clamping router tables and belt sanders to work benches, allowing for both hands to handle the work piece and not the machine.

F-clamps can also be used to edge glue boards, if the bars are long enough. They are a VERY versatile clamp and come with screw clamp and ratchet actuating systems.

Hand Screw Clamps

Hand screw clamps are much different than bar/pipe clamps and F-clamps, in that these clamps are comprised of two bulky pieces of wood connected by two wood-handled screws. Hand screw clamps are commonly used for clamping work to work benches, as well as face gluing pieces.

Hand screw clamps are not the clamp of choice for edge gluing boards, due to their limited opening capacity, but they have great reach.

Jorgensen 7272 72 I-Bar Clamp



Jorgensen's I-bar clamps are heavy duty clamps that are designed for edge gluing boards into panels. The steel I-bars are extremely strong and resistant to bending and twisting. These clamps are available in a variety of lengths, but the clamp reach is only about 1 1/2" so they won't be as versatile as other clamps. The quick adjusting tail clamp provides for rapid set ups.

Price

The Jorgensen I-bar clamp can be a little more costly than the other two in the selection but the sturdy nature and heavy-duty usage make up for it.

Clamping Mechanism

These clamps are quick adjusting with the final force provide by the screw clamp. One can quickly open or close these clamps as necessary and then rest assured that good clamping force will be provided by the screw mechanism.

Bar

The backbone of these clamps are the heavy steel I-bars. The combination of the bar and the quick adjusting mechanism make for quick glue ups. These heavy-duty clamps should last a wood worker's life time.

Conclusion

These are heavy clamps that are available in multiple lengths, these clamps will provide for many clamping options. They shine when edge gluing stock for larger panels. The only limitation is there ability to only reach about 1 1/2" inches into a board, so they are not the best for clamping wood to work benches.

Bessey GSCC2.524 Bar Clamp



Bessey economy clutch style bar clamps are medium duty clamps that are suitable for a wide variety of woodworking project. The clutch plate system on the tail end of the clamp allows for quick adjustments. Protective pads are included to cushion the clamping jaws, preventing marring the stock.

Price

Bessey F-style clamps are reasonably priced and a good choice for the new wood worker. The cost will vary depending upon the length purchased. It pays to buy longer clamps than necessary, as you never know when you're going to need a longer clamp.

Clamping Mechanism

These clamps are quick adjusting with the final force provide by the screw clamp. One can quickly open or close these clamps as necessary and then rest assured that good clamping force will be provided by the screw mechanism.

Bar

The backbone of these clamps is the flat steel bar. The combination of the bar and the quick adjusting mechanism make these clamps a great fit for any woodworker's shop. Rest assured that these clamps will do the job with their stout "back bones."

Conclusion

These are a great first addition to any woodworking shop. Available in multiple lengths, these clamps will provide for many clamping options. They shine in their versatility. The only limitation is there ability to only reach about 1 1/2" inches, so they don't serve as well for clamping wood to work benches.

Grizzly G8066 12-Inch Hand Screw



Grizzly hand screw clamps are another great addition to any woodworking shop. Although designed for clamping parts together, these clamps also serve well to hold small parts when drilling and routing, thus keeping the woodworker's hands safe. These clamps can also be adjusted to an infinite number angles.

Price

Grizzly's hand screw clamps are reasonably priced, with the price based upon the size of the clamp. These clamps are definitely within reach of the new woodworker, looking to outfit his shop.

Clamping Mechanism

Hand screw clamps use two parallel screws, with handles mounted on opposite sides. These clamps are adjusted by cranking them with both hands to adjust the opening. Final adjusting is done by twisting one, or both, handles.

Bar

Hand screw clamps don't actually have a bar like the other two clamps discussed, but instead use two wooden "jaws" that act as the bar or back bone of the clamp. These clamps have deep throats, so they can reach far into boards, or a workbench. Being made of wood, these clamps can crack if over tightened. This can be prevented by only using one's hands to set the clamping pressure.

Conclusion

Hand screw clamps do not lend themselves to gluing up panels, but they sure shine when it comes to holding parts for machining and clamping odd or thick projects. Not necessarily the first choice in woodworking clamps, these clamps fill a void that other clamps cannot.

Wood level buying guide



Just when would a woodworker pull out the level? Here's a few times that a level is an indispensable tool.

Hanging Wall Shelves

Who wants a wall shelf that doesn't sit level? Pretty much nobody. Shelves need to sit level. The best way to ensure that the shelf is perfectly horizontal is by pulling out the level when hanging it.

Setting Fence Posts

Fence posts need to be plumb to the ground. Well, they don't need to be, but that's the correct way to build a fence. It's a sign of a quality craftsman. The right level will assure that your posts are pointing straight up and down.

Hanging Pre-Hung Doors

Door frames HAVE to be vertical. If not, the door will tend to swing open or closed, depending upon how the door frame is off from plumb. Doors that are not plumb will swing closed when they should stay open, and that's VERY irritating.

Installing Cabinets

Kitchen cabinets and counter tops should be absolutely level. Counter top spills that run to the edge are irritating. A level counter top will prevent that.

Hanging Art on Walls

Photos, art, and such look SO wrong when not level. Use levels to mark double hanger holes in the wall and to level the piece when it's actually hung on the wall.

Checking Angles Other Than Vertical and Level

Some levels have the ability check measurements other than vertical and level. Want to set a 45 degree rafter on your new woodworking shed? You'll need a level that will read 45 degree. Many levels can read infinite numbers, so you have many to choose from.

What To Consider When Buying A Wood Level

Accuracy

Accuracy is the most important quality in a level. An item hung even a few degrees off of level will not look right, so it's very important to purchase accurate levels. Most levels come accurately set from the factory, but bubble levels can be off if they've been jarred roughly in shipping.

Digital levels have to pass quality control standards assuring accuracy and are manufactured so that they retain that accuracy. One really has to depend upon the manufacturer to provide accurate levels.

One really can't look at a level and determine it to be so, but one can do some online research to see what other users have to say about accuracy.

Durability

Levels need to be made of materials that will last. Wood was the original material used to make the main body of the level. Now days they are available in polymers and aluminum. The later two tend to be lighter than wood and do not suffer so much from age.

Different Types Of Wood Levels

Bubble Levels

Bubble levels use slightly curved tubes of glass filled with fluid and a single bubble of air. The curve of glass is situated like a rainbow with the bow towards the top. The bubble moves to the high point when used. The glass tubes are marked with two lines set apart the width of the bubble. When the level is level, the bubble will be centered between the two lines.

Digital Levels

Digital levels utilize electronic circuitry that senses perpendicular relation to the earth's center. These can measure and infinite number of angles and come "zeroed" from the factory. When reading absolute level, the level should indicate zero degrees. Measuring plumb, the level should read 90 degrees.

M-D Building Products 92325 48-Inch Smart Tool Digital Level with Carrying Case



The M-D Smart Tool Digital level is the priciest level of the lot, as it has a digital read out. Using patented sensor technology it measures with an accuracy of 1/10 of a degree. One can also set it to beep at a predetermined angle. A 9v battery is required for power. A case is included to protect it during transportation and storage.

Price

This is the most costly of the levels covered, so one would have to think hard to justify the cost. It's not overly pricey for a digital level of its size and accuracy, so it's a value in itself.

Body

The body is a rugged box beam made of aluminum, for lightness and durability. It's powder-coated in yellow for visibility and protection.

Display

The Smart Tool Digital level has not only a digital display, but also

vial (bubble) sights for quick reading of level and plumb. The digital display can read in degrees, roof pitch, or inches per foot. Along with the digital readout, one can set the level to beep when it reads a desired angle.

Conclusion

While the most expensive level, this level offers the greatest variety of measuring methods. Although not necessary for general shop work, it will serve in many scenarios, both in the shop and in the field. This level will shine when setting the pitch when installing rafters or stair hand rails. The included case is a bonus.

Stanley 42-324 24-Inch I-Beam 180 Level



The Stanley 24" I-Beam level is a great level for checking the level of counter tops as well as marking double hangers when hanging shelves and such. The aluminum construction is durable and light. The top of the level is marked off as a rule, making measurement on the fly easy to do.

Price

This level is very reasonably priced for its size and quality.

Definitely easy on the pocket book , it would be a great addition to the shop.

Body

The Stanley I-Beam level's body is an aluminum I-beam that is powder coated for durability and visibility. As mentioned earlier the

top is marked off as a rule, so one can measure and level with it. The markings are easy to read.

Display

The Stanley utilizes a 3-vial (bubble) sight system which are easy to read. Two of the vials are permanently affixed at 0 degrees (level) and 90 degrees. The third vial can be rotated so that this level can read a variety of angles.

Conclusion

This level is a great buy for the quality and size. The versatile adjustable vial makes it more useful than many other levels. One can't go wrong with this level, which will serve well in the shop and in the field.

CHECKPOINT 0300PL Pro Mag Precision Torpedo Level



The Checkpoint Pro Mag torpedo level is 8 1/2 inches long which makes it a great choice for quick measurements and easy carrying in one's pocket. It's light weight aluminum construction will last for years and it has Rare Earth magnets in one side so that it can adhere to metallic objects such as pipes and metal fence posts.

Price

The Pro Mag torpedo level is the least expensive level of the lot, which makes it a great choice for the new woodworker when outfitting his tool cabinet or bag.

Body

The body is machined from 6061 aluminum alloy which is commonly used in aircraft construction. 6061 aluminum is harder than your standard beer can aluminum, so this level will hold up for years. One side of the body has a v-groove machined with Rare Earth magnets allowing it to set on pipe and fence tubing without having to hold it.

Display

The Pro Mag torpedo level utilizes a 4-vial (bubble) system, reading 90 degrees, 45 degrees, and 0 degrees (level). The vials have oversized view ports and an oversized 0 for easy reading from all sides.

Conclusion

With the quality, size and cost all working in its favor, the Pro Mag torpedo level is a great choice. It's compact enough for leveling wall art, but long enough for most other jobs. To check the level of a distance over its 8 ½ inches, simply place the Pro Mag on top of an aluminum straight edge and you're good to go.