

002 MASTER LAYOUT AND MEASURING

You've probably heard the phrase, "measure twice, cut once." The following tools help make that a reality.

FRAMING SQUARE The usual L-shaped framing square has a 24-inch leg (the blade) and a shorter 16-inch leg (the tongue). The right-angle design level consistently with the accuracy of right-angle level inside and outside corners. Most framing squares also come with reference tables to assist in determining roof pitches and calculating rafter heights, along with other general applications.



T SQUARE For large areas, details, and short jobs, a T square can be used to measure and mark straight, accurate lines up to 48 inches. It can also be edge-clamped to place and use as a guide for making straight cuts.



COMBINATION SQUARE The combination square consists of the blade in several sizes and a stock, which slides along the blade and can be completely retracted. A bubble-level indicates the stock is flat. The combi square can be used to check inside and outside corners for 90 and 45 degrees. It can be used as a marking gauge to draw a pencil line against an edge, and the blade can be used to measure the depth of a hole or groove from its. The stock features a bubble vial for checking level and plumb.

LEVELS Both a 4-foot and a 6-foot level are handy for determining if an object is indeed level. When the bubble vials inside between the marks on the vial, the tool is level for plumb. The longer a level's length, the greater its accuracy. However, in many cases a 6-foot level is too long and cumbersome for a small job, making the 4-foot version a better option.



003 SCREW IT BETTER

As your projects get more complex, you'll want to consider adding to your screwdriver collection.



MULTIPURPOSE This option can reduce the number of tools you need to carry with you. A variety of bits, usually stored in the handle, insert into a hexagonal drive shaft. Compare models to find the best bit selection for you.

MINI Eyeglasses, mobile phones, computers, and personal electronics often have very small screws, which in turn will require very small screwdrivers. Minis are available in flat-head, Phillips, Torx™, Pozidriv and more.



BITCHETING As with a socket wrench, the quick-drive, ratcheting action drives screws fast while "backdriving" in the opposite direction. This eliminates the need for the user to release and re-grip the screwdriver, saving time and labor.

CORDLESS A no-fuss, no-frills battery-powered screwdriver can be fixed with any number

bits in a wide range of sizes and diameters. When you're dealing with a lot of screws, you'll appreciate the high-production efficiency this best power tool brings to your projects. Keep one on the charger for grab-and-go convenience.



004 SMOOTH THINGS OUT

Whether you're smoothing joints or prepping a new piece of furniture to stain and finish, sanding will be a necessary step in the process. The abrasive particles in the sandpaper are guided and contained as "grit," indicating how coarse or fine these particles are. A good approach for a DIY'er is to select three grits to have on hand. Start with the sandpaper that's just coarse enough to get rid of the worst surface defects. As finer sandpapers are usually a good place to start. However, coarse grits will leave fine scratches on the wood, so the next step will be to take these large scratches into smaller scratches with a finer paper of around 120-grit. For the final smoothing phase, sandpapers at 220-grit will work for most types of wood. Wood with dense grain may require finer grits, such as 320-grit, to remove the last of the scratches, then finishing in a smooth, ready-to-finish surface.



Power sanders do the work for you. Small palm sanders can smooth a wood surface in preparation for staining and sealing. Aggressive belt sanders can tear away an old wood surface with less-than-efficient efficiency. And oscillating disc sanders strike a balance between aggressive material removal and finish sanding.



005 SPLURGE ON THESE TOOLS

Many people find themselves buying expensive tools they almost never use. Be smart about purchases, but sometimes it does make sense to spend the money, as in the following cases.



FLUID FINDER If you plan to hang anything heavy on a wall, you'll need to insert it into a solid stud in the wall's framing. To do so, you must first locate the stud. When passed over a wall, an electronic stud finder sends electrical impulses to find the stud and signal its location for you to mark.

WORK LIGHTS Tools over the lighting in the form of tripod flashlights or LED headlamps are great for DIY. These low-wattage, low-heat lights come in handy for work inside closets, and in any work circumstance where the power has been shut off.



NAIL-PULLING PLIERS

Remodeling work will usually involve demolition, which often necessitates removing all those nails and fasteners installed by the original builder. A hammer claw won't grab onto a headless head nail, and standard pliers don't offer adequate leverage for pulling them out. To remove pesky old nails,

invest in specially pliers constructed with an angled head to grip and pry them loose.

LASER MEASURING DEVICE A relative newcomer to the hardware store shelves, this tool is also called a distance meter, range finder or laser "tape" measure, depending upon the manufacturer, and is great for taking precise measurements. Once you have the laser aimed, you press a button and the device calculates the distance and then displays it on the screen. This measurement is taken with precision laser optics that accurately measure the distance of the beam that hits a target object.

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