
Subject: Newbee Tools

Posted by [Cuppa Joe](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 05:07:14 GMT

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Thinking about finally taking the plunge into DIY.... I'd like some recommendations for reliable power tools, please! They need to serve the double purpose of speaker building/assembly, and home remodeling projects. A jigsaw and a cordless drill/driver would have to be the first 2 items on the list, but I'm sure that a good circular saw, a sander, and a plunge router will follow eventually. For loudspeaker enclosures, the wood of preference is Baltic Birch, if that helps. I'm not interested in cheap crap either, because this may be the last set of power tools I buy. I've heard the names "Bosch" and "Porter Cable" frequently mentioned on other forums. Opinions, please?

Subject: Spend the money on precision

Posted by [colinhester](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 15:19:10 GMT

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Don't blow big bucks on the drill, jig saw, sander, or other items that will not be used in precision cuts. Even a circ saw is a pretty crude tool, although when used with a saw board or guide can give acceptable results. Spend money on a table saw, compound miter saw, plunge router and brad gun/compressor combo. Spend the money on top-notch blades. Spend money on squares and alignment tools. Bosch and PC make nice tools, but our contractors swear by DeWalt. I'm just building my first set of speaker cabs, and I'm finding the tools I use on a job site are mutually exclusive to what I use to build the cabs.....C

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision

Posted by [Cuppa Joe](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 19:49:05 GMT

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Thanks for the quick reply, CH. Here come the detail questions: I live in a small, ground-level condo with a postage stamp for a patio, so the table saw is OUT and the sawboard is IN. Does this change the choice of circular saw? For that matter, does the compound mitre saw have a collapsible base? Almost everything has to fit into a tiny hallway closet, just big enough to hide a couple of bodies. (The SAF, y'know!) Even if not too expensive, the non-precision tools still need to be reliable. I'm assuming that's why you recommended DeWalt. What brands did you buy for precision tools? What diameter circular saw/blade works best for you? Why a brad gun? I thought that screw'n'glue was the preferred construction method for pro audio boxes. Plus, plenty of clamps and straps!

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision
Posted by [Bob Brines](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 21:27:03 GMT
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Since you are not going to use as table saw, I recommend a PC 423 circular saw. It's a left hand saw which is better for precision cuts by a right hander. That's opposite the recommendation for rough framing. At the low end of acceptable is the PC 690 router. I have one with both the plunge and fixed mounts. I use both to the point that I am going to buy another motor so I don't have to keep switching. Bob

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision
Posted by [Cuppa Joe](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 22:25:31 GMT
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Thanks for the specifics, Bob. If I use a lefty circular saw, would I need a lefty sawboard, too? (Just kidding...!)

Subject: Gotch ya'
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Sat, 24 Mar 2007 23:06:16 GMT
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Bob had an excellent suggestion for the left-hand drive circ saw. Get a good blade and an accurate square. Saw boards are easy to make and work great. Another option is to call cabinet shops and see what they'll charge per cut. You might be very surprised how inexpensive some will be. You might also see if there's a woodworker's club in your area. Craigslist.com (if in your area) would be a great place to post requests. Compound miter saws are nice for trim work or cutting small widths. Sliding cpd. miter saws give a bit more cutting width but are expensive. I have a DeWalt 706 (12" dual tilt, non-sliding) and I love it. This rides in my truck everywhere I go and has not been knocked out of alignment yet. Would I recommend Dewalt for the average guy? Maybe. There are very nice non-precision tools to be had at a fraction of the cost. For example: My workhorse cordless drill cost me \$20 at a grocery store. It's a no-name 24V drill that has two gears and a hammer function. I thought for the money I could use it a couple of months and toss it when it dies. Well, two years later I finally toated the low gear setting when running a 2' long 3/4" bit through 8" of solid wood (I was running electric through a coffered beam.) I think I got my \$20 worth. As for circ saws, I have a B&D and a couple of Chicago brand (Harbor Freight.) I cannot tell the difference. I don't use quality blades, since they are for rough framing. Again, go with what Bob said. My table saw is a Grizzly G0575 with a thin-kerf Freud combo blade. I've had about 6 months, but just last week had a chance to really use it. This saw makes a hack like me look good. I must have stared at the first box I made for over an hour. I could not believe the joints. They were all dead on. I'll post pics on the Pi forum later tonight. I'm anxious to show off my work. You're right about the screws. Use them (or biscuits) on all joints. I mention the brad

gun strickly from a home improvement stand point. If you're doing trim work (crown, chair rail, etc) the good ones will leave a nice little hole where the nail went in. Cheaper ones will tend to shatter the wood, even at a lower PSI setting. Porter Cble makes a nice two gun/compressor combo that is just fun to use. If you know what you want, check Amazon.com for really good deals. Hope this helps.....Colin PS. I've rehab'd a number of condos. Nothing dress them up like trim work. Put some trim up watch the SAF go way up. The'll be begging you to buy more toolsC

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision
Posted by [Bill Epstein](#) on Sun, 25 Mar 2007 01:33:01 GMT
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The P-C 690 router has been around forvever and is still well-made unlike the 2 HP plunge they now offer. I have 2, they cut through anything and are easy to adjust. Neither plunge and I seldom use my big Freud FT-2000, not even for driver cut-outs. A good cordless screw gun is a must and power isn't very important. I'd suggest a 12V Rigid from Home Depot. It has a lifetime guarantee which even covers battery replacement. My table saw is the cheap looking Ryobi with foldong legs and wheels. It cuts 29" to the right which will do any cabinet panel. No problem to cut 3/4" MDF and surprisingly accurate. When not in use it stands against the wall near the door tucked behind one of the speakers. Rolls in and out to the patio easily. Spend a hundred dollars on 8 Jorgensen 3/4" pipe clamp fixtures and black pipe instead of a nail gun. Get 4 of those quick-release clamps, too. 18 and even 16 ga. nails deflect in MDF anyway. No need to bother with screws for glue ups. Make some jigs for clamping the pieces square like Bob Brines shows on his website. If you have to go with the circular saw Bob has good advice on the left hand blade saw. Its a big bastard, tho'.

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision
Posted by [Cuppa Joe](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2007 02:29:27 GMT
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Thanks for the tips, guys! Lots of options to consider. I've never built any boxes from scratch, but I've modified the baffles on home stereo speakers that I had found in 2nd hand stores, but only if the build was solid. In the past, I've had to borrow tools as needed, with limited degrees of success. One tool was called a keyhole saw (hand-held, unpowered), which was convenient for such work, but the cut was pretty rough. What can you guys recommend in place of a keyhole saw for baffle surgery on a pre-made speakerbox? (I usually leave the woofer cutouts alone and modify the mid/high sections.)

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2007 17:11:16 GMT

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I've seen posts where people mount a board inside the cabinet, centered over the hole to be modified, and then a Jasper Jig/ plunge router como is attached to the board. Not perfect, since there is some distance (1/2" - 3/4" due to baffle thickness) between the center point of the router's arc and the actual cutting surface. Only time I've ever used a keyhole saw if for cutting drywall. That must have been a chore cutting woodC

Subject: Re: Spend the money on precision
Posted by [Cuppa Joe](#) on Tue, 27 Mar 2007 03:46:11 GMT
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Yes, there was a certain amount of sweat'n'swearing involved! The wood in those old stereo boxes is usually particle board, though the existing mid/tweeter cutouts make the job of sawing less arduous. For one project, I adhered a 1/4" piece of plywood over the upper half of the baffle, leaving the 10" woofer cutout intact, then I *hacked* the cutout for a cheap CD-ish horn with a 1.8kHz piezo driver. With a simple x-over I designed, a new Pioneer woofer, some paint & hardware, my father's old speakers came back to life. They actually sound pretty good with some EQ!

Subject: Re: Newbee Tools
Posted by [colinhester](#) on Wed, 11 Apr 2007 02:24:45 GMT
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Finally got a router. I went with DeWalt w/ plunge base. Man, it makes me look good.....C

Subject: good craftsman never blames his tools...
Posted by [PakProtector](#) on Sat, 27 Oct 2007 23:05:38 GMT
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but you don't ever see a good craftsman passing up fine tools, or using an inadequate one. cheers, Douglas

Subject: Re: good craftsman never blames his tools...

Posted by [colinhester](#) on Sat, 27 Oct 2007 23:43:20 GMT

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DOUG!!!! How are you? Long time no hear. What's new? Saw on AK a while back you were making some big (really, really, really) amps. How's that comin'?.....C

Subject: Re: good craftsman never blames his tools...

Posted by [PakProtector](#) on Sun, 28 Oct 2007 00:29:11 GMT

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hey-Hey!!!,I got them built up a day after the '07 AK Fest ended. I suppose I could have missed the fest and finished the amps before it ended, but...I am now preparing to run 813's in it. Boost B+ a bit, and perhaps swap in new outputs. I can't come to any decision, the S271S Peerless, or CFB with a pair of Chicago BO-14, or keep the multiple tap S265Q in place. It does sound really good with 4E27's and the S265Q, so good I am low on motivation to change anything in truth. Probably going to go phono stage first. Best Regards, Douglas and I am still running around AK on a regular basis.
