

*The*  
**RIGHT TOOLS**  
*in the*  
**RIGHT ORDER**



What to Buy Now,  
What to Add Later,  
and What Can Wait.



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# **SERIOUS HOBBYIST TOOLS**

**Phase 2: The Smart Upgrade Path for Better Shop**

## Phase 2: The Upgrade Path for Better Shop

# SERIOUS HOBBYIST TOOLS

Tools to Add When You're Ready to Build Complex Projects

Once you have the starter tools and you have built a few projects, you will begin to notice something.

Some jobs take too long.  
Some cuts are hard to repeat accurately.  
Some sanding feels like punishment.  
Some assemblies need more clamps than you currently own.

That is when Phase-2 begins.

These tools are not required on day one. You can build plenty of useful projects without them.

But if you are starting to enjoy woodworking, building shop projects, making furniture, or doing more involved DIY work around the house, these are the tools that make the work faster, cleaner, and more accurate.



***The key is not to buy all of them at once.  
Add them as your projects demand them.***

*- Dan Miller*

# Quick List: Serious Hobbyist Tools

- 1. Miter saw**
- 2. Random orbital sander**
- 3. Jigsaw**
- 4. Table saw**
- 5. Shop vacuum**
- 6. Bar clamps & Pipe Clamps**
- 7. Wood Router**
- 8. Oscillating Multi-Tool**
- 9. Belt sander**
- 10. Brad nailer**
- 11. Track Saw**
- 12. Impact driver**
- 13. Pocket hole jig**
- 14. Level**
- 15. Stud Finder**

# 1. Miter Saw

A miter saw is one of the first upgrade tools many DIYers buy, and for good reason. It makes quick, repeatable crosscuts. If you are cutting 2x4s, trim, shelving boards, baseboards, picture frames, or project parts to length, a miter saw is much easier and faster than using a circular saw for every cut.

## Why you need it:

- Fast and accurate crosscuts
- Repeated cuts to the same length & angle
- Angled cuts for trim and frames
- Cleaner, more controlled cutting than a circular saw



You can also use it for angled cuts, which makes it useful for trim work, frames, outdoor projects, and decorative pieces.

For many homeowners and weekend woodworkers, a 10-inch compound miter saw is a practical starting point. A sliding miter saw gives you more cutting capacity, but it also costs more and takes up more space.

## When You Should Get a Miter Saw:

You find yourself cutting lots of boards to length and want better speed, accuracy, and repeatability.

**Safety Tip:** After you complete the cut, release the trigger, and wait for 2–3 seconds for the blade to come to a complete stop before lifting the head.



**TIP:** The blade that comes with the saw is usually a general-purpose blade which is good for rough cuts. Get a 80 to 100 teeth Diablo carbide tipped blade for your finish cuts.

## 2. Random Orbital Sander

When you are starting, sanding by hand using a sanding block works fine. But after a few projects, you will probably want an easier solution.

A random orbital sander is one of the best upgrades for beginner and intermediate woodworkers. It removes material faster than hand sanding and leaves a smoother surface than many basic sanders.

### Why you need it:

- Faster sanding
- Smoother surfaces
- Less hand fatigue
- Better finish without burn marks or swirl marks.



It is useful for furniture parts, shelves, tabletops, cabinet pieces, plywood projects, and general surface prep before finishing.

For most hobbyists, a 5-inch random orbital sander is the standard choice. Corded models are affordable and reliable. Cordless models are convenient, but sanding can drain batteries quickly.

### When You Should Get It:

When you want to sand large boards, panel, and project part easily with smooth surface.

**Safety Tip:** Sanding generates lots of fine dust that can cause long-term lung damage. Always wear a high-quality dust mask or respirator, even if your sander has a built-in dust bag.



**TIP:** Don't force the power sander. Let the sander do the work. Pressing down sander too hard can leave swirl marks and make the tool less effective.

## 3. Jigsaw

A jigsaw handles cuts that a circular saw and miter saw cannot do easily. It is used for curves, notches, cutouts, and irregular shapes.

If you want to cut a hole in a panel, shape a decorative edge, trim around an obstacle, or make a curved project part, a jigsaw is the simple way to do it.

### Why you need it:

- Curved cuts
- Interior cutouts
- Notches and odd shapes
- Cutting countertop openings
- DIY repairs and modifications



A jigsaw is not always the cleanest or most accurate saw, but it is very versatile. With the right blade and a steady hand, it can do a lot.

### When You Should Get a Jigsaw:

Your projects include curves, cutouts, or shapes that straight-cutting saws cannot handle well.

### Blades:

- Use 6–10 TPI blades for soft wood for fast cutting.
- For hardwood, using a 10–14 TPI finer teeth blade reduce splintering and provide smoother finishes.



**TIP:** Use the right blade for the material.  
A good blade makes a bigger difference than most beginners expect.

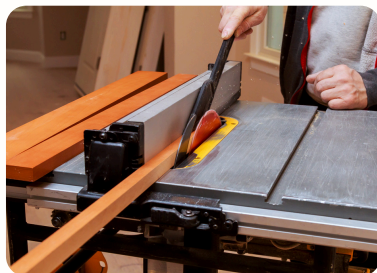
## 4. Table Saw

A table saw is a major step up in a woodworking shop.

It is especially useful for ripping boards to width, cutting sheet goods into repeatable strips, making accurate straight cuts, and building furniture or cabinet-style projects.

### Why you need it:

- Ripping boards to width
- Making repeated straight cuts
- Cutting plywood and panels more accurately
- Building cabinets, furniture, and shop projects



That said, this is not a tool to rush into casually. A table saw requires respect, proper setup, and safe habits.

### Table Saw Size:

For a serious hobbyist, a 10-inch jobsite table saw is often the practical choice. It is smaller and more affordable than a cabinet saw, but still capable enough for many home-shop projects.

### When You Should Get a Table Saw:

You are regularly building projects that require accurate repeated cuts, especially ripping boards or cutting panels.

### Safety Note:

Learn how to use the blade guard, riving knife, push sticks, and proper body position. A table saw is incredibly useful, but it is also one of the tools where safe habits matter most.



**T**IP: Table saw is one of the most dangerous power tools. Take safety very seriously. Make sure that the blade is installed correctly and always use push sticks.

## 5. Shop Vacuum

Sawdust becomes a problem faster than most beginners expect. A shop vacuum helps keep your workspace cleaner and safer.

It can collect dust from sanders, clean up sawdust after cutting, and handle general garage or workshop mess.

It is not the same as a full dust collection system, but it is a very practical upgrade for a small shop.

### Why you need it:

- Cleaner workspace
- Protects your lungs from fine dust
- Better dust control
- Easier cleanup
- Useful for both shop and household messes.



For a hobbyist setup, a wet/dry shop vacuum with enough capacity and a decent hose is a good starting point.

If you use a sander often, a shop vac connected to the sander can make a huge difference.

### When You Should Get a Shop Vac:

You are making enough sawdust that sweeping is no longer enough.

Dust collection is not glamorous, but your lungs and your garage shelves & floor will both thank you.



**TIP:** For your small shop, get a vacuum with a 2.5-inch hose. I would also suggest, a shop vac with a motor with at least 5–6 peak horsepower (HP), and a tank capacity between 12 to 16 gallons.

## 6. Bar Clamps & Pipe Clamps

*You can never have too many clamps.*

That line gets repeated so often in woodworking because it is true.

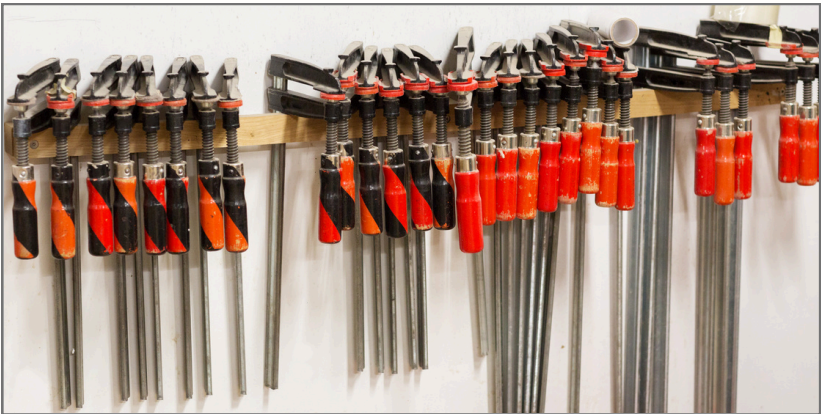
Once you start making larger projects, your starter quick-release clamps may not be enough. Bar clamps give you more reach and better holding power for glue-ups, panels, frames, shelves, and furniture parts.

### Why you need it:

- Gluing larger parts
- Holding frames square
- Clamping shelves, panels, and cabinet parts
- Keeping assemblies aligned while fasteners or glue set



A pair of 24-inch bar clamps is a good upgrade. Over time, you can add more lengths as your projects grow.



### When You Should Get Them:

Your projects are getting bigger and your starter clamps are no longer long enough.



**T**IP: Buy clamps in pairs when possible. Most glue-ups are easier when holding pressure is balanced from both sides.

## 7. Wood Router

A router is one of the most versatile tools in a woodworking shop.

It can round over sharp edges, cut grooves, create dadoes, make rabbets, shape profiles, trim edges, and help with joinery. Once you understand what a router can do, you start seeing uses for it everywhere.

### Why you need it:

- Rounding over edges
- Cutting grooves and dadoes
- Trimming and shaping wood
- Milling cruved edges and profiles
- Making cleaner, more finished-looking projects



For a serious hobbyist, a fixed-base and plunge-base router kit is a very useful setup. Something like a Bosch 1617 with a plunge base is a common example of the type of router that can grow with you.

You do not need a giant collection of router bits right away. Start with a few useful bits and add more as your projects require them.

### When You Should Get Router:

You want your projects have curved edges, profiles and look less rough and more finished, or when you need grooves, dadoes, rabbets, and edge profiles.



**T**IP: A wood router can feel intimidating at first because it spins fast and sounds angry. Start with simple edge profiles, take shallow passes, and build confidence slowly.

## 8. Oscillating Multi-Tool

An oscillating multi-tool is one of those tools that does not look very impressive until you actually need it.

Then suddenly, it feels like the only tool that can do the job.

It is especially useful for homeowner DIY work, repairs, remodeling, and awkward cuts where a circular saw, jigsaw, or hand saw cannot easily reach.

You can use it to trim door casing, undercut door jambs, make small plunge cuts, cut drywall, remove old caulk, scrape adhesive, trim small pieces, and handle odd repair jobs around the house.



For pure woodworking, it is not always a must-have starter tool. But for weekend DIY warriors, it is extremely handy.

### Why you need it:

- Making small plunge cuts
- Trimming door jambs and casing
- Cutting in tight spaces
- Scraping old adhesive or caulk
- Handling repair and remodeling tasks

### When You Should Get It:

You do a lot of home repair, remodeling, trim work, or small awkward cuts that other saws cannot handle easily.



**T**IP: An oscillating tool is not the tool you use for every project. It is the tool you are very glad to own when nothing else fits.

## 9. Belt Sander

A belt sander is not a delicate finishing tool.

It is a fast material-removal tool.

Use it when you need to flatten rough surfaces, level uneven boards, remove old finish, smooth large rough areas, or shape wood quickly.

### Why you need it:

- Fast stock removal
- Leveling rough boards
- Removing old paint or finish
- Smoothing large surfaces like table top or working bench quickly



It can save a lot of time, but it can also damage a project quickly if you are careless. This is one of those tools where a light touch matters.

### When You Should Get Belt Sander:

You regularly work with rougher lumber, reclaimed wood, or larger surfaces that take too long with a random orbital sander.

Turn the sander on and let it reach full speed before it touches the wood.

Always sand parallel to the wood grain to avoid deep cross-grain scratches that are difficult to remove later.



**T**IP: Always keep the sander moving. If you pause in one spot, it can dig a low spot into your workpiece.

## 10. Brad Nailer

If you've spent any time trying to hold small pieces together while glue dries, you'll quickly see why a brad nailer earns its place in the shop. It's not absolutely essential, but once you use one, it feels like gaining an extra set of hands. Think of it as a quick, reliable way to "lock" pieces in place so they don't shift around on you.

A brad nailer lets you tack parts together in seconds; perfect for trim, moldings, cabinet backs, or delicate frames. So you're not stuck wrestling with clamps or waiting around for glue to set. It keeps everything aligned while the glue does its job, making your work faster, cleaner, and a whole lot less frustrating.

### Why you may want it:

- Fast assembly
- Attaching trim and thin pieces
- Holding glued parts while they dry
- Reducing clamp time on small parts
- For repairing upholstery and securing fabric to solid wood frames.



For many DIYers, an 18-gauge brad nailer is the most useful starting point.

You can choose pneumatic (air) or cordless. Pneumatic nailers are often lighter and cheaper, but require an air compressor.

Cordless nailers are convenient but usually more expensive.

### When You Should Get Nailer:

You build trim projects, small furniture, cabinets, shop storage, or anything with thin parts that need quick fastening.



**T**IP: A brad nailer may look harmless compared to a saw, but it can still injure you badly. Keep your hands away from the firing path and remember that nails can curve inside the wood.

# 11. Track Saw

A track saw is like a circular saw on steroids. It runs along a guide rail, which lets you make long, straight, accurate cuts in plywood, MDF, panels, doors, countertops, and other sheet goods.

For many small-shop woodworkers and DIYers, a good track saw can reduce the need for a large table saw, especially if most of your projects involve breaking down plywood sheets.

It is also easier to store than a table saw and safer for cutting full-size sheets because the material stays flat and supported while the saw moves across it.

## Why you may want it:

- Breaking down plywood sheets
- Making long, straight cuts
- Cutting large panels safely
- Trimming doors and countertops
- Working in a garage or driveway shop
- Getting cleaner cuts than a regular circular saw and straightedge setup



A table saw is still better for repeated narrow rip cuts, small parts, dados, joinery setups, and production-style work. But for cutting large sheet goods accurately, a track saw is often the better tool.

## When You Should Get It:

You often work with plywood, MDF, cabinet panels, shelving boards, or large sheet goods, and you want cleaner, straighter cuts without wrestling full sheets on a table saw.



**T**IP: If your shop is small, a track saw can be a smart alternative to upgrading your table saw right away. It does not replace every table saw job, but for sheet goods, it can feel like a cheat code.

## 12. Impact Driver

An impact driver looks similar to a cordless drill, but it is designed mainly for driving screws and fasteners.

It delivers quick bursts of rotational force, which makes it very good at driving long screws, lag screws, deck screws, structural screws, and fasteners into tougher material.

### Why you may want it:

- Driving long screws
- Building decks and outdoor projects
- Assembling workbenches and storage racks
- Driving fasteners faster with less effort
- Reducing strain compared to using a drill for everything.



For basic woodworking, a cordless drill can handle a lot. But if you build decks, outdoor projects, garage storage, workbenches, or anything with lots of screws, an impact driver can save time and wrist strain.

Many homeowners eventually end up with both: a drill for drilling holes and an impact driver for driving screws.

### When You Should Get It:

You are driving a lot of screws, working with construction lumber, or building heavier DIY projects.



**T**IP: Use a drill and impact driver together for faster work-flow. Drill the pilot hole with a cordless drill, drive the screw with the impact driver, and the work moves much faster.

# 13. Pocket Hole Jig

A pocket hole jig is one of the most beginner-friendly joinery tools you can own.

It helps you drill angled holes so you can join boards together with screws. The result is quick, strong enough for many projects, and much easier than learning more advanced joinery on day one.

## Why you may want it:

- Driving long screws
- Building decks and outdoor projects
- Assembling workbenches and storage racks
- Driving fasteners faster with less effort
- Reducing strain compared to using a drill for everything.



*Image: Kreg® Pocket-Hole Jig K4*

Pocket hole joinery is especially useful for shop storage, simple furniture, face frames, cabinets, benches, tables, and quick home projects.

Is it traditional fine woodworking? Not really.

Is it useful? Absolutely.

For many weekend DIYers, a pocket hole jig can be the difference between thinking about building a project and actually getting it done.

## When You Should Get It:

You want to build simple furniture, storage projects, cabinets, or frames without learning advanced joinery first.



**T**IP: Use the correct screw length for your material thickness. Pocket holes work well, but only when the jig, drill bit depth, and screws are set up properly.

# 14. Bubble Level

A bubble level is more important for homeowner DIY than pure woodworking, but most weekend woodworkers do both.

If you are hanging shelves, installing cabinets, mounting wall brackets, building garage storage, setting up benches, or installing trim, a level is one of those simple tools you will reach for often.

## Why you may want it:

- Hanging shelves
- Installing cabinets and brackets
- Leveling workbenches and shop fixtures
- Checking vertical and horizontal alignment
- Home repair and installation projects



A 24-inch level is a useful starting size for many home projects. A small torpedo level is also handy for tight spaces.



## When You Should Get It:

You are doing wall-mounted projects, built-ins, storage systems, or general home maintenance.



**TIP:** Use the correct screw length for your material thickness. Pocket holes work well, but only when the jig, drill bit depth, and screws are set up properly.

## 15. Stud Finder (Optional for DIYers)

A stud finder helps you locate wall studs behind drywall.

For homeowners and DIYers, this is very useful. If you are hanging shelves, cabinets, pegboards, French cleats, TV mounts, tool racks, or garage storage, you need to know where the solid framing is.

Drywall alone is not strong enough for heavy loads.

A simple electronic stud finder is affordable and easy to keep in your basic kit. Some people prefer magnetic stud finders because they locate screws or nails in the studs. Either type can work.

### Why you may want it:

- Finding wall studs
- Hanging shelves and cabinets
- Installing pegboards and tool racks
- Mounting heavy items safely
- Avoiding weak drywall-only installations



### When You Should Get It:

You plan to attach anything heavy to a wall (shelves, storage units, TV mounts etc).



**TIP:** Do not trust one pass blindly. Scan from both directions, mark the edges of the stud, and confirm the center before drilling.

# Phase-2 Tools: What Can You Build?

Now that you have added some serious collection of power tools added to your starter kit, your project options expand a lot.

## You are ready to build:

- Workbenches with storage
- Bookcases and showcases
- Kitchen and living room furnitures
- Cabinet-style storage
- Garage organization systems
- Built-in shelves
- Coffee tables
- Outdoor furniture
- Small cabinets
- Trim and molding projects
- Shop carts and tool stands
- Build & install of shelves on the wall.
- And nearly all the small woodworking projects.



The main difference is not that Phase 2 tools magically make you a better woodworker.

They make common tasks easier.

They help you cut more accurately, sand faster, clamp better, shape edges, control dust, and assemble projects more efficiently.

That is the real point of the upgrade path.

Do not buy these tools just to fill your shop.

Buy them when your projects start asking for them.

**Next Up...**

# **THE ULTIMATE DREAM SHOP**

**Phase 3: Advanced & Specialized Tools and Large Machines**

## Phase 3: Advanced & Specialized Tools

# ULTIMATE DREAM SHOP TOOLS

Advanced Tools for Bigger, Better, and More Specialized Projects

Phase 3 is where woodworking starts to feel less like a corner of the garage and more like a real shop.

But let me say this clearly:

You do not need all these tools to become a woodworker.

Plenty of people build beautiful, useful projects without owning a lathe, drill press, cabinet saw, bandsaw, etc.

These are not beginner essentials. They are not “must-buy” tools. These are the tools you consider when you have more experience, more space, a bigger budget, and a clear reason to own them.



The Dream Shop is not about showing off. It is about expanding what you can build.

These tools help you work more accurately, handle larger material, make specialized cuts, create curves, drill repeatable holes, shape parts, and explore new types of woodworking.

If Phase-1 gets you started, and Phase-2 makes your work faster and cleaner, Phase-3 opens the door to more advanced projects.

# 1. Vertical Bandsaw

A vertical bandsaw is one of the most useful advanced tools in a woodworking shop. Unlike a table saw, which is mainly used for straight cuts, a bandsaw can cut curves, irregular shapes, templates, small parts, and thicker stock. It can also be used for resawing, which means cutting a thick board into thinner boards.

That opens up a lot of possibilities.

Want to cut curved chair parts, make big and complex furniture, shape decorative pieces, or work with thicker hardwood?

A bandsaw can help.

## Why you may want it:

- Cutting curves and irregular shapes
- Resawing thicker boards into thinner pieces
- Making templates and shaped parts
- Cutting small parts more safely than on some other saws
- Working with thicker material

For a dream shop, a solid floor-standing bandsaw is ideal, but many hobbyists start with a smaller benchtop or compact model.



A bandsaw is one of those tools that does not look flashy, but once you have one, you keep finding new reasons to use it.

## When You Should Get It:

You want to build projects with curves, shaped parts, resawn boards, or thicker hardwood that your current saws cannot handle well.



**TIP:** Adjust the upper blade guard to be **no** more than  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " above your workpiece. This stabilizes the blade and minimizes exposed metal.

## 2. Drill Press

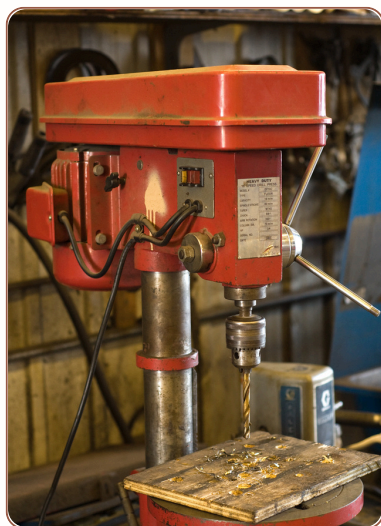
A handheld drill is fine for many jobs, but it has limits.

A drill press gives you control, accuracy, and repeatability. It drills straight holes at consistent depth, perpendicular to thickness, which is hard to do perfectly by hand.

This ability becomes very useful for dowel joinery, shelf pin holes, toy making, jigs, fixtures, hardware installation, and any project where hole placement matters.

### Why you may want it:

- Drilling straight, accurate holes
- Repeating the same hole depth
- Using Forstner bits and larger drill bits more easily
- Making jigs and fixtures
- Improving accuracy on joinery and hardware



A drill press also lets you use larger bits more comfortably, including Forstner bits.

For many home shops, a benchtop drill press is enough. A floor-standing model gives you more capacity, but it takes up more space.

### When You Should Get It:

You often need precise holes, repeated holes, or clean flat-bottom holes that are hard to make accurately with a handheld drill.



**TIP:** Use clamps or work-holding device when drilling small parts. Do not try to hold small workpieces by hand under a spinning bit.

## 3. Forstner Bits

Forstner bits are not a machine, but they belong in the Dream Shop category because they become more useful as your projects get more advanced.

A Forstner bit cuts clean, flat-bottom holes. That makes it useful for concealed hinges, dowel holes, overlapping holes, decorative holes, and hardware installation.

You can use some Forstner bits with a handheld drill, but they work best in a drill press where you have better control.

### Why you may want it:

- Clean flat-bottom holes
- Concealed hinge boring
- Dowel and plug work
- Decorative holes
- Hardware installation

A basic set of common sizes is enough to start. You can add specialty sizes later as specific projects require them.



### When You Should Get It:

You need cleaner, more accurate holes than regular twist bits or spade bits can provide. Forstner bits are a good example of a tool you do not need every day, but when you do need one, nothing else feels quite right.



## 4. Oscillating Spindle Sander

A spindle sander is designed for sanding curves.

If you cut curved parts with a jigsaw or bandsaw, the cut edge usually needs cleanup. A spindle sander makes that job easier, faster, and more accurate.

It uses a small sanding drum that moves in an oscillating motion. That helps reduce burning and gives you a smoother result on inside curves, arcs, templates, and shaped pieces.

### Why you may want it:

- Sanding inside curves
- Smoothing bandsaw or jigsaw marks
- Shaping curved parts
- Cleaning up templates
- Making decorative projects look more polished



### When You Should Get It:

You regularly cut curves and are tired of trying to sand them by hand.



**T**IP: Save your offcuts when cutting curves. They can sometimes help support the workpiece while sanding or serve as test pieces.

## 5. Cabinet Saw

A cabinet saw is a serious table saw.

Compared to a jobsite table saw, it is heavier, more powerful, more stable, and usually more accurate. It has a larger table, better fence system, smoother operation, and more capacity for furniture and cabinetmaking work.

### Why you may want it:

- More accurate ripping and crosscutting
- Better stability with sheet goods and hardwood
- Smoother, more powerful cutting
- More reliable fence alignment
- Furniture and cabinetmaking projects



*Image: SawStop® Industrial Cabinet Saw*

This is one of the centerpiece tools in a dedicated woodworking shop. But it is also expensive, heavy, and space-hungry.

You do not buy a cabinet saw because you are curious about woodworking. You buy one when woodworking has become a serious long-term hobby, side business, or major part of your life.

### When You Should Get It:

You have outgrown your jobsite table saw and need better accuracy, power, capacity, and stability for serious woodworking.



**TIP:** A cabinet saw is still a table saw. Bigger and heavier does not mean safer by default. Use guards, riving knife, push sticks, featherboards, and safe cutting habits every time.

## 6. Wood Lathe

A wood lathe opens up a completely different side of woodworking.

Instead of cutting flat boards into furniture parts, a lathe spins the wood while you shape it with turning tools.

This lets you make bowls, pens, handles, knobs, spindles, table legs, candle holders, tool handles, and decorative round parts.

### Why you may want it:

- Turning bowls, pens, knobs, and handles
- Making round furniture parts
- Creating decorative spindles and legs
- Exploring woodturning as its own hobby
- Using small pieces of beautiful wood creatively



Woodturning is almost a separate hobby inside woodworking. Some people buy a lathe for one project and then fall completely in love with turning.

That said, a lathe also requires accessories: turning tools, sharpening equipment, chucks, face shields, and dust control. The lathe itself is only part of the cost.

### When You Should Get It:

You are interested in round or turned projects and are willing to learn the tools, sharpening, and safety habits that come with woodturning.



**TIP:** A wood lathe can be addictive. I have seen people buy one “just to try it” and suddenly every scrap of hardwood in the shop starts looking like a future bowl or handle.

## 7. Scroll Saw

A scroll saw (or fretsaw) is a specialized saw for detailed, intricate cuts.

It is not a replacement for a jigsaw or bandsaw. Instead, think of it as the tool for small, precise, decorative work.

### Why you may want it:

- Cutting detailed patterns
- Making ornaments, toys, and puzzles
- Creating decorative cutouts
- Cutting tight curves
- Working on small craft projects



A scroll saw is excellent for cutting patterns, curves, inside cutouts, ornaments, puzzles, signs, toys, and craft-style woodworking projects.

If you enjoy fine detail work, this tool can open up a whole new side of woodworking. But if you mostly build shelves, benches, cabinets, and outdoor projects, you may not need one right away.

### When You Should Get It:

You want to make detailed decorative projects, craft items, wooden signs, toys, patterns, or tight curves that are difficult to cut cleanly with a jigsaw.



**T**IP: A scroll saw is not for everyone, but for the right person, the scroll saw can become the most creative and relaxing tool in your working shop.

## 8. Wood Jointer

A wood jointer is used to flatten one face of a board and make one edge straight and square.

This becomes important when you start working with rough lumber instead of pre-surfaced boards from the home center.

### Why you may want it:

- Flattening one face of a board
- Straightening one edge
- Preparing rough lumber
- Improving glue-ups
- Getting better results before using a planer or table saw



If you buy rough hardwood, reclaimed lumber, or boards that are slightly twisted, cupped, or bowed, a jointer helps you create a flat reference face and a straight edge. That makes the rest of the milling process much more accurate.

A jointer is not something a beginner needs right away. But for a serious woodworking shop, especially one that works with hardwood, it becomes a very useful machine.

### When You Should Get It:

You start buying rough lumber or want better control over board flatness, straightness, and edge quality.



**T**IP: A jointer is not exciting in the flashy-tool sense, but flat boards make better projects. A lot of woodworking problems begin with wood that was never properly milled.

## 9. Thickness Planer

A thickness planer is used to make boards a consistent thickness.

Once one face of a board is flat, the planer can make the opposite face parallel and bring the board down to the thickness you need.

This is especially useful if you work with rough lumber, want to save money buying thicker boards and milling them yourself, or need several boards to match perfectly for furniture parts, tabletops, shelves, and panels.

### Why you may want it:

- Making boards a consistent thickness
- Surfacing rough lumber
- Cleaning up old or reclaimed boards
- Matching boards for furniture parts
- Preparing stock for panels, shelves, and tabletops



A planer does not replace a jointer. The jointer flattens one face. The planer makes the second face parallel to the first.

For many hobbyists, a benchtop thickness planer is a practical starting point.

### When You Should Get It:

You want to work with rough lumber, reclaimed wood, or hardwood boards that need to be milled to a consistent thickness.



**T**IP: A planer can feel like a money-saving machine once you start buying rough lumber. **Remember:** it works best when the board already has one flat reference face.

## 10. Air Compressor

An air compressor is not a woodworking tool by itself, but it powers several useful power tools and DIY tools.

The most common use in a small woodworking shop is running pneumatic nailers, especially brad nailers and finish nailers. It can also be used for blowing dust out of tools, inflating tires, and powering certain air tools.

### Why you may want it:

- Running a pneumatic brad nailer or finish nailer
- Inflating tires and sports equipment
- Blowing dust from tools and work areas
- Powering light-duty air tools
- Supporting some painting and finishing setups



For many weekend DIYers, a small pancake compressor is enough. It is affordable, portable, and works well for brad nailers, finish nailers, and light-duty tasks.

You do not need a large compressor unless you plan to run high-air-demand tools like sanders, grinders, spray guns, or automotive air tools.

### When You Should Get It:

You choose pneumatic nailers or air tools instead of cordless versions, or when you want a useful general-purpose shop compressor.



**TIP:** Do not buy a huge compressor just because it looks serious. For most small woodworking shops, a twin hot dog compressor or a wheelbarrow compressor will do plenty.

## **Bonus Section**

# **DIY TOOLS**

**Tools for Home Improvement & building crafts**

# TOOLS FOR DIYers

(Home Repair, Crafts & Home Improvement)

## Caulk Gun

A caulk gun is one of those simple tools every homeowner ends up using sooner or later.

It helps you apply caulk or construction adhesive neatly around tubs, sinks, windows, trim, baseboards, and small repair jobs. It is cheap, useful, and worth having in the house before you need it.



## Utility Knife

A utility knife is one of the handiest tools you can own for everyday DIY work.

It is great for opening boxes, trimming material, scoring drywall, cutting caulk tube tips, slicing carpet, and doing all the little jobs where a bigger tool would be overkill. Keep fresh blades on hand and it becomes even more useful.



## Angle Grinder

An angle grinder is a compact but tough tool for cutting metal, grinding bolts, cleaning rust, sharpening rough edges, and handling certain masonry jobs with the right wheel.

Angle grinder is very useful for metalworking and homeowners who like doing their own fixing and maintenance. Just make sure to use the right wheel and proper safety gear.



## Hacksaw

A hacksaw is a simple, reliable tool for cutting metal, plastic pipe, bolts, threaded rod, and other small materials around the house or garage.

It is not fancy, but it is useful for repair work, plumbing fixes, and light-duty cutting jobs where power tools are unnecessary. Every basic DIY kit should have one.



## Dremel

A Dremel is a compact rotary tool that is handy for detail work, cutting, grinding, sanding, polishing, and hobby-style projects.

It shines on the little stuff: grinding and trimming hardware, cleaning rust, sanding, polishing, etc.

It is not a heavy-duty tool, but for crafts and small repairs, it is incredibly useful.



## Oscillating Multi-Tool

An oscillating multi-tool is a problem-solver. It is great for small plunge cuts, trimming in tight spots, undercutting door jambs, scraping old adhesive, cutting drywall, and handling repair work where other saws just do not fit. It may not be the first tool you buy, but once you own one, you will reach for it more often than you expect.



## Reciprocating Saw

A reciprocating saw is the go-to tool for rough cutting and demolition work. It is great for cutting old lumber, nails, pipes, drywall, branches, and all the ugly stuff that needs to come out during repairs or remodeling. It is not a precision saw, but when you need speed and access, it is hard to beat.



## Hammer Drill / Rotary Hammer

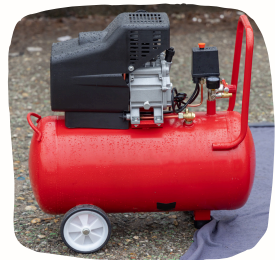
A hammer drill or rotary hammer is what you want when you need to drill into brick, concrete, stone, or masonry. A regular drill will struggle with that kind of work, but a hammering action makes the job much easier. This is especially useful for mounting shelves, brackets, railings, or other fixtures into masonry walls.



## Portable Air Compressor

A portable air compressor is a handy support tool for the home and garage. It can inflate tires, run a brad nailer, power light air tools, and help with general cleanup or maintenance.

You do not need a huge one for beginner DIY work. A small portable unit is usually more than enough for most homeowners.



# Optional Add-Ons for Auto Repair

## Impact Wrench

An impact wrench is mainly for loosening and tightening lug nuts, bolts, and stubborn fasteners. If you do your own tire changes, brake jobs, or basic car maintenance, it can save you a lot of effort. It is not essential for every homeowner, but if you work on cars, it is a great tool to have.



## Torque Wrench

A torque wrench helps you tighten bolts to the correct specification instead of just guessing. That matters a lot in automotive work, especially for lug nuts and other safety-related fasteners. It is not a general home repair tool, but for garage DIY, it is one of those tools that helps you do the job properly.



## Floor Jack

A floor jack makes it much easier and safer to lift a vehicle for tire changes, brake jobs, and other basic car maintenance. It is far more stable and practical than the small emergency jack that comes with most cars. If you do any work under or around your vehicle, this is a smart addition to your garage setup.



## Final Note: Build Your Shop One Project at a Time

If there is one thing I hope this guide makes clear, it is this:

You do not need to buy every tool before you start building.

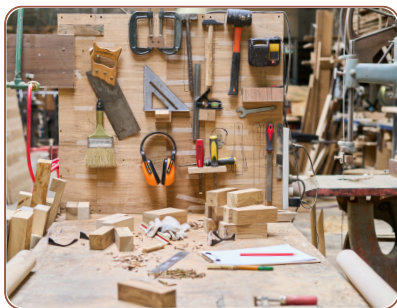
A lot of beginners wait too long because they think they are not “ready” yet.

They do not have the perfect shop.

They do not have the perfect saw.

They do not have enough clamps.

They do not have the expensive tool they saw someone using online.



But woodworking does not begin when your shop is complete. Woodworking begins when you make the first cut, drill the first hole, sand the first edge, and finish the first simple project.

**Start with the basic tools.** Build something useful. Learn what worked. Notice what frustrated you. Then buy the next tool when it solves a real problem.

That is the calm, practical way to grow a shop.

Your first few projects do not need to be perfect. In fact, they probably will not be. Mine certainly weren't.

But every project teaches you something.

You will learn how wood behaves. You will learn how your tools feel. You will learn which cuts make you nervous, which tasks take too long, and which upgrades would actually help. That experience is far more valuable than buying a pile of tools before you know what you need.

So use this guide as a roadmap, not a shopping commandment.

Phase 1 gets you started.

Phase 2 helps you build faster, cleaner, and more accurately.

Phase 3 gives you room to specialize, and expand when you are ready.

There is no rush.

**Build your shop the same way you build a good project:  
one careful step at a time.**

*- Dan Miller*

# Don't Buy Your Next Tool Without Reading Us First

Head over to [FinePowerTools.com](https://www.finepowertools.com) to find the tool comparisons, how-to guide, project plans, and maintenance deep-dives designed to help you master every tool in your kit.

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