
"Understanding Hand Tools"

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Those of you who have a few hand tools will most likely have no trouble identifying the following tools and may also be able identify with their uses. If you can't, your tools are most likely still in their original wrappers.

DRILL PRESS: A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, splattering it against that freshly-stained heirloom piece you were drying.

WIRE WHEEL: Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned guitar calluses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, "YEOWW"!

ELECTRIC HAND DRILL: Normally used for spinning pop rivets in their holes until you die of old age.

SKIL SAW: A portable cutting tool used to make studs too short.

PLIERS: Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

BELT SANDER: An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.

HACKSAW: One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

VICE-GRIPS: Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to Transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH: Used almost entirely for lighting various flammable objects in your shop on fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub you want the bearing race out of.

TABLE SAW: A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

E-Z OUT BOLT AND STUD EXTRACTOR: A tool ten times harder than any known drill bit that snaps neatly off in bolt holes thereby ending any possible future use.

RADIAL ARM SAW: A large stationary power saw primarily used by most shops to scare neophytes into choosing another line of work.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST: A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

CRAFTSMAN 1/2 x 24-INCH SCREWDRIVER: A very large pry bar that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on the end opposite the handle.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids and for opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; but can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out Phillips screw heads. Women excel at using this tool.

STRAIGHT SCREWDRIVER: A tool for opening paint cans. (It is sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws.)

AIR COMPRESSOR: A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to a Chicago Pneumatic impact wrench that grips rusty bolts which were last over tightened 30 years ago by someone at Ford, and instantly rounds off their heads. Can also be used to quickly snap off lug nuts.

PRY BAR: A tool used to crumple the metal surrounding that clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50 cent part.

HOSE CUTTER: A tool used to make hoses too short.

HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent the object we are trying to hit. Women primarily use it to make gaping holes in walls when hanging pictures.

MECHANIC'S KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on contents such as seats, vinyl records, liquids in plastic bottles, collector magazines, refund checks, and rubber or plastic parts. Especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use.

DAMMIT TOOL: Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling "DAMMIT" at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need.
