

THE BASIC TOOLKIT

There is a constant stream of members joining the Guild who are new, or relatively new, to woodworking, and who have little by way of hand tools, but are keen to get started. There are different approaches to this. Firstly there is the saying “Do not sharpen a tool until you need to use it. Do not buy a tool until you need to sharpen it.” On a more practical level, you will want a minimum of tools to get you started.

Before cutting a piece of timber, you will need to **mark it out**. The following will start you off:

- ◆ A ruler for measuring, such as a 300 mm steel rule, and a tape measure — with readable scales.
- ◆ A marking knife and a pencil (an HB pencil sharpened to a fine point — a flat carpenter’s pencil is too coarse for fine marking, but may be useful elsewhere).
- ◆ A marking gauge — this will allow you to scribe a line parallel to an edge. It is not a difficult tool to make, and is a good early project.
- ◆ A combination square — this enables you to mark square to an edge, and at 45°.

We then move on to **cutting**. For this I would suggest the following:

- ◆ A tenon saw, or similar backsaw.
- ◆ A bench hook — this is a simple, but useful accessory, and like the marking gauge, easy to make.
- ◆ A coping saw, for cutting curves.
- ◆ A set of four or five bevel-edged chisels.
- ◆ A mallet for when you need to strike a chisel. Modern chisels with plastic handles are not damaged by striking with a hammer, but a mallet has a larger striking face, reducing the risk of missing and hitting your hand! Making your own mallet would be a good project.
- ◆ A No 5 bench plane. This is more useful than a No 4, which is only a smoothing plane. The greater length of the No 5 will help straighten a board, while it is still capable of smoothing.

Finally, two other useful items:

- ◆ A cross-peen hammer (eg Warrington Pattern) is more suited to bench work than a claw hammer.
- ◆ A sanding block, either solid cork, or cork-faced MDF / plywood.

The items listed above are those selected for the toolboxes provided for the Schools Program and kept under the Jarrah bench. A rule of thumb is to buy the best you can afford, although alternatively some modestly priced tools can give good results. Experienced members are able and willing to assist in the choice of what represents the best quality and value for money. Further items should be acquired on an as-needs basis, depending on the kind of work you want to do. For example, you might consider a block plane and spokeshaves (with flat and round soles for smoothing outside and inside curves), and then a smoothing plane, such as a No 3, 4 or 4½.

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