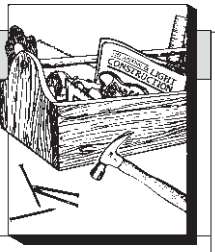
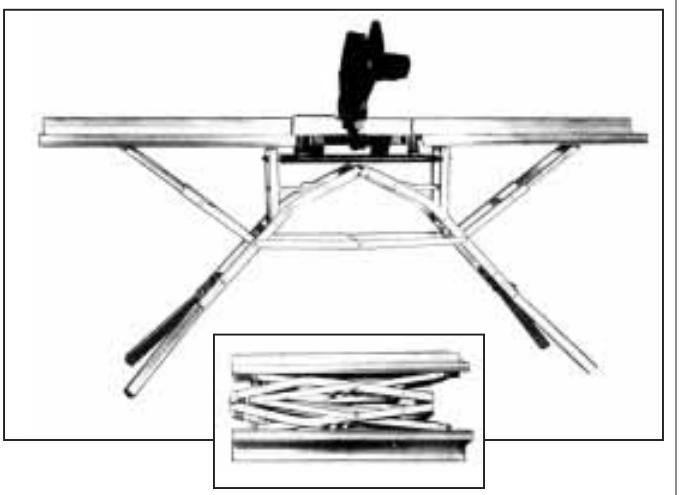


A Truly Portable Miter Saw Stand

by Clayton DeKorne



The LiteHorse *is a lightweight, fold-up miter saw stand. It's simple to set up, and folds down (inset) to a 9x18x36-inch rectangle that stows neatly into a loaded truck.*

Miter saws, often the heart of an on-site shop, are most useful when they are set at a comfortable height on a sturdy stand that can support lengthy material.

There are several commercially-made, collapsible miter saw stands of varying designs on the market. Rousseau's *MiterSaw Stand*, and American Design and Engineering's *SawWalker* are both sturdy saw stands with adjustable stock supports. They collapse into large, rolling packages, and offer extended fences and measuring stops as options. RMS Manufacturing's *MS-500 SawStand* is a lighter, less expensive version that also folds up, but doesn't have wheels. And Trojan Manufacturing's *Trojan Workcenter* includes a saw table, two rolling supports, and a pair of folding legs, which all clamp to the edge of a 2x6.

But of all the collapsible saw stands I've seen, the *LiteHorse* (107 West Elm Street, Anaheim, CA 92805; 714/776-3447) most gracefully fulfills the promise of portability and easy setups.

A Little Aerospace

The LiteHorse is designed and manufactured by a California finish carpenter who described it, tongue in cheek, as "very aerospace." Made of welded aircraft aluminum, the overall construction of the LiteHorse is lightweight and rugged. And the folding mechanisms rely on some very precise machining that looks like something off the lunar landing craft.

Broken down, the LiteHorse is not much bigger than many 10-inch miter saws. It weighs 32 pounds and comes in a 9x18x36-inch rectangle that stows neatly into a loaded truck. Extended, the stand is 36-inches high and has 3 feet of table and fence — complete with a sawdust groove and measuring stop — on either side of the saw.

To set it up, the legs and table wings fold out and the saw is slid into place. While it is simple to assemble, the mechanisms that keep the table and fence extensions straight and flat are relatively sophisticated. Each extension rides on sliding trestles that can be adjusted up and down at four points to keep the table dead flat. These support mechanisms can also be adjusted forward and back to keep the fence straight. A telescoping diagonal brace that locks into its upright position supports the far end of each table.

The extensions slide in and out to accommodate any size miter saw. The saw bolts to a table (a piece of melamine-covered particleboard) that is supported along two channels. These channels clamp to the stand and can be adjusted to hold the saw at the height of the extension wings. But you only have to make the adjustment once. After it is set to the width and depth of your particular saw, you just slide the saw table in during the setup, the board locks in place, and it becomes a fixed part of the system.

Added Performance

A measuring stop slides in a continuous groove along the fence. It adjusts quickly by loosening a knob and moving a hairline indicator along a stick-on tape. A piece of 1x clamps onto the sliding mechanism and allows the indicator to be adjusted to the zero mark.

The stop is not an essential feature, but it can save you time, especially on repeat cuts. On a long table, it could be used to measure most cuts quickly.

LiteHorse offers additional 3-foot extensions as options. These have a separate folding leg, and nest into the existing wing to make a 6-foot bed on each side. For siding and finish crews, who deal with long clapboards or crown molding, these extensions would be essential.

The LiteHorse sells for about $350, which puts it in the range of other top-of-the-line saw stands. Performance-wise, I think it's the best thing out there. So what's the catch? Just a word of caution: While the 24-inch-wide footprint is stable enough to support most saws, a 60-pound, 15-inch chop saw makes the rig top heavy. On uneven ground, you could knock the whole setup over with a bump from an armload of 2x4s. Set against a wall, or with the feet dug in on a level surface, however, this wasn't a problem. ■

TOOLBITS

Ever need a right-angle drill but can't justify a HoleHawg? Someone finally made a heavy-duty, right-angle drill attachment that you can afford to keep in your toolbox for occasional use. The *Duro Angler* 90 (Duro Enterprises, 4415 W. Harrison St., Hillside, IL 60162; 708/449-0236) sells for about $25 and will chuck into any 3/8-inch or larger drill. The Angler features its own 3/8-inch industrial-grade Jacobs chuck, a heat-treated steel shank, and a "double heat-treated" helical gear which proved strong enough to power a 4-inch hole saw through framing lumber.

Delta recently jumped on the portable planer bandwagon with the introduction of the *22-540* 12-inch thickness planer. This new Delta will handle stock up to 6-inches thick by 12-inches wide. It has a 15-amp motor that turns a two-blade cutterhead at 8,000 rpm and handles a feed rate of 26 1/2 feet per minute. These performance specifications are identical to most other portable planers (see *Toolbox*, 8/90). The Delta differs mostly in its packaging: The depth-of-cut handle folds down to make a sleek parcel that's less likely to catch on tailgates and door jambs, and two handles on top of the tool should make it easier to carry. The table extensions detach, instead of folding as on the other planers. This might streamline it for transport, but it seems to me only more to keep track of.

For predrilling, then driving, a *Chuck-Mate* is easier to use than changing bits or setting up two drills. These bits come with either a self-centering Vix bit or a combination pilot bit and countersink, and have three prongs that slip over a hex screwdriver bit. Once you drill your hole, you just pull the bit off and drive the screw. Chuck-Mates are made in Canada and imported by the Robert Larson Company. Larson is strictly a wholesale outfit, but if you drop them a postcard, they'll put you in touch with an area distributor. Write the Robert Larson Company, 33 Dorman Ave., San Francisco, CA 94124.

— *C.D.*