

# TOOLS FOR TIGHT SPOTS



*Though it's smaller and less powerful than a reciprocating saw, the new Bosch B4050 in-line jigsaw will fit into a joist or stud bay and can be operated with one hand.*

THESE SPECIALTY  
SAWS, DRILLS, AND  
WRENCHES WILL  
SQUEEZE INTO  
PLACES THAT ARE  
SHORT ON ELBOW  
ROOM

BY BILL  
BROCKWAY

Working new construction, you can usually plan your actions to make the best use of the tools you have at hand. When you're remodeling, however, the site conditions often demand a specific tool. A reciprocating saw, for example, may be required to make certain cuts — like slicing flush to a plate to sever the nails holding a stud in place.

Oldhouses are full of surprises. The studs may not be on standard centers, so your drill won't quite fit in between the studs to drill that hole. Or somebody screwed the ductwork together before the subfloor was on and now all the screws are out of reach. Or you may have to retrofit seismic anchors when you can't reach the plate because the plumbing is in the way.

To help you solve these puzzles, many tool manufacturers offer streamlined versions of some of their tools. We've pulled together a group of these tools designed especially for working in confined spaces. They'll help you reach around, under, behind, over, and through the many obstacles you'll encounter while working in an old house. The tools divide roughly into three categories: saws, drills and attachments, and wrenches.

# SPECIALTY SAWS

Getting a row of saw teeth aimed at the right piece of a house can sometimes be the biggest challenge of the day. The tough part is usually finding room for all of the stuff attached to the teeth — blade, motor, housing, cord. The reciprocating saw is, of course, a champion at this, and has earned its place in the Remodeling Hall of Fame. Here are a few more contenders:



**Crain Super Saw**

## Super Circular Saw

Imagine turning your circular saw on its side and making cuts flush to the floor (or cutting a floor flush to the wall). The *Super Saw* from Crain Cutter Co. can do that — and even undercut doors while they hang! It adjusts from a flush cut to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches from the meeting surface. You can also use it with a masonry blade for notching hearths to receive new flooring.

Crain Cutter Company, 156 S. Milpitas Blvd., Milpitas, CA 95035; 408/946-6100.

## In-Line Jigsaw

Though it looks like a little recip saw, the Bosch B4050 (photo, facing page) from SB Tools is described as an “in-line jigsaw” and uses Bosch-style jigsaw blades. It’s most useful for cutting the kind of things you would normally use a jigsaw for — light metal or plywood, for instance. It also cuts through drywall, plaster, paneling, shingles, and flooring. But if you need to cut through a 2x12, you’re better off with your recip saw. Though you may have seen this tool advertised already, it’s just now hitting store shelves.

S-B Power Tool Co., 4300 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60646; 312/286-7330.



**Milwaukee Sawzall offset**

## Sawzall Offset for Flush Cuts

An option on the popular Milwaukee Sawzall, this offset device holds the blade above the shoe, allowing you to cut flush without bending or twisting a blade. This means you can make long, precise flush cuts without the blade wandering away at an angle. The blade is turned 90 degrees from the position you are used to. Different attachments are needed for the original Sawzall (model 6507) and for the new Super Sawzall.

Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp., 13135 W. Lisbon Rd., Brookfield, WI 53005; 414/781-3600.



**Porter-Cable Tiger Cub**

## Streamlined Recip Saw

Porter-Cable’s *Tiger Cub* is the recip saw of choice for reaching into small cabinets or welding at arm’s length. It weighs less than half what the original Sawzall does, and it has a bigger motor and a longer stroke. Though it comes with an auxiliary side handle, it can be

operated easily with one hand. The one-hand operation is ideal for demolition cuts where you need the other hand free to make sure the offcut falls where it should.

Porter-Cable Professional Power Tools, 4825 Hwy. 45 N., Jackson, TN 38302; 800/321-9443.



**Fein Triangle Sander with Saw Set**

## Versatile Sander Doubles as Saw

Fein makes a number of saw blades and scrapers for its MSX636-1 *Triangle Sander*. With a super-thin-kerf (about 1/32 inch) blade attached, this machine is often the best choice for precision cuts in hard-to-reach places. It’s ideal for reaching into a kickspace to make a cut for a new heater, for example. The small-diameter (3 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches) blade oscillates back and forth. It won’t win any awards for speed cutting, and you have to take care to hold the blade straight to get a good, square cut. Still, you’d be surprised how well it works. With a diamond-coated blade, this tool is great for digging out the grout around a broken tile. With a scraper blade, it’s one of the best tools I’ve found for scraping up old vinyl and carpet adhesive.

Fein Power Tools, 3019 W. Carson, Pittsburgh, PA 15114; 800/441-9878.

# DRILLS & DRILL ATTACHMENTS

Most of the problem-solvers in this category simply allow you to position a  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch chuck somewhere other than in line with the spindle on the end of your drill. None of these tools are substitutes for heavy-duty right-angle machines. These tools are for light-duty tasks, such as attaching drawer slides in a tray cabinet or securing a countertop through a drawer opening — tasks that are aggravating with a standard drill.



**DeWalt DW160**

## Low-Profile Right-Angle Drill

DeWalt's slim right-angle drill features a shielded chuck that won't chew up any cabinets it happens to brush against. The DW160 has a large switch that runs almost the full length of the body, so you can turn it on from any hand position. This comes in handy when the screw you're driving (or the hole you're drilling) is just beyond arm's length. This tool is especially useful for drilling because the flat head makes it easy to apply good pressure with your free hand.

DeWalt Industrial Tool Corp., P.O. Box 158, Hampstead, MD 21074; 800/433-9258.

the Milwaukee label) has its head set at a 125-degree angle. This unique shape actually makes it easier to put force behind the head when you're operating the drill with one hand. You can wrap your hand right around the head and practically guide the bit with your fingers. This can be useful when working in spots where you can't always see what you're doing — behind appliances or in joist bays, for example. The switch is a large paddle-type that operates well with either hand. It's worth noting that the Sioux's industrial drill motor is exceptionally well made and is likely to run just about forever.

Sioux Tools, 2901 Floyd Blvd., Sioux City, IA 51102; 800/722-7290.

## Makita DA390



## Cordless 90-Degree Drill

Makita's cordless right-angle model DA390 will get you into places no corded drill can go. Inching through a crawlspace, for instance, is much easier when you don't have to drag an extension cord after you. The drill uses the same 9.6-volt batteries that your regular Makita cordless uses, too.

Makita USA, 14930 Northam St., La Mirada, CA 90638; 714/522-8088.

Hitachi unveiled a right-angle cordless drill at the 1994 National Hardware Show this past August. Though the tool isn't available yet, here's what we know about it. The

## General Tools flexible drill shaft



new DN10DY is a 9.6-volt cordless tool and should be on the store shelves in early 1995.

Hitachi Power Tools, 3950 Steve Reynolds Blvd., Norcross, GA 30093; 800/706-7337.

## Flexible Shaft

The *long-reach drill extension* from General Tools can snake into the tightest corners. Chuck it onto your drill and you can reach up to 40 inches away and twist the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch chuck at any angle to drill small holes and drive short screws. This

tool takes two hands to run, however — one on your drill and one guiding the shaft — unless you've got a safe place to put your drill down with the trigger locked on. Watch your speed with this one — it's not safe over 3,000 rpm.

General Tools Mfg. Company, 80 White St., New York, NY 10013; 212/431-6100.

## Right-Angle Converter

The *Duro Angler 90* is a quick right-angle conversion adaptor that you can keep in your toolbox. It's not only useful in the usual right-angle applications, like tight joist and stud bays, but its narrow profile also



**Sioux 8030**

## Odd-Angle Drill

The *Sioux 8030* (also sold under

# WRENCHES

Swing a ratchet handle around a remodeling job site and you're likely to bump into something — usually something you can't move. The tools in this category help you crank down that nut or lag bolt when you don't have the room to swing.



**Duro Angler 90**

makes it perfect for reaching screws and small bolts that are recessed below the work surface.

Duro Enterprises, 4415 W. Harrison St., Hillside, IL 60162; 708/449-0236.



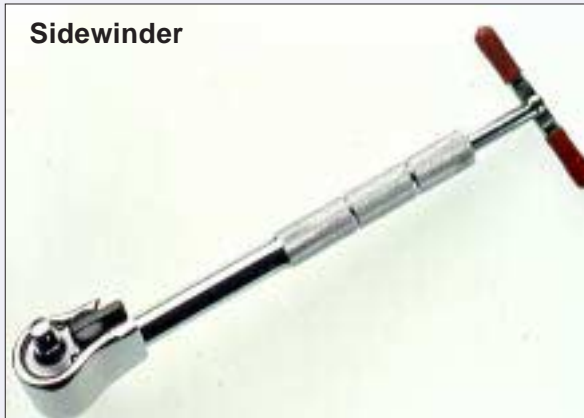
**AEG Offset Driver**

## Offset Attachment

For lighter-duty applications, such as attaching sash locks, the AEG Offset Driver attachment is ideal. It chucks into a 1/4-inch drill chuck and holds a 1/4-inch hex bit. The added wing is a handle to help guide the tool; it can be positioned anywhere around the attachment's driver head.

Chicago Pneumatic Tool Co., 2220 Bleeker St., Utica, NY 13501; 800/243-0870.

## Sidewinder



## Ratchet for Tight Spots

The Sidewinder is the perfect ratchet for tight spots. Instead of rocking the handle back and forth to operate the ratchet, you twist the T-handle. The internal gears are rated to 175 foot-pounds — strong enough to crank down on a 3/4-inch anchor bolt. Anywhere the arc of travel of a normal ratchet is limited, such as behind appliances or in a small stud bay, this tool will save the day.

Sidewinder Products, 320 2nd Ave. North, Birmingham, AL 35204; 205/252-7122.

## SK Hand Tool split-end wrench



## Split-End Wrench

This wrench from SK Hand Tools opens up to give you access to a nut, then locks down like a box wrench as you apply pressure. It's useful with seismic anchors because you sometimes have less-than-perfect access and with this tool you can really torque them down.

SK Hand Tool Corp., 3535 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632; 312/523-2103.

## Tubing Cutters

The Ratch-cut from Rex-Wheeler uses a ratchet mechanism to spin the cutter around the pipe. When the pipe you're after is one among many, this cutter

will work where standard pipe cutters won't fit.

Rex-Wheeler Mfg., P.O. Box 688, Astabula, OH 44004; 216/998-2788.



**Rex-Wheeler Ratch-Cut**



**Superior Tool Mini Tubing Cutter**

The Mini Tubing Cutter from Rigid or Superior Tool spins around the pipe just like big ones — but requires much less clearance. It's really useful when you need to cut pipes that are plumbed in close to a wall.

Superior Tool Co., 100 Hayes Dr., Unit C, Brookline Heights, OH 44131; 216/398-8600. ■