

# New Hammers & More

by Pete Young

**E**rgonomics is a buzzword in the world of tools these days. Even hammer designs are changing in ways that purportedly reduce wear and tear on hammer-swinging arms.

Stanley's *Anti-Vibe* hammers, available in models from 16 oz. up to 32 oz. (\$32-\$52), supposedly reduce elbow and forearm fatigue with a shock-absorbing durable polyurethane-encased I-beam shaft and a soft-vinyl handle. Likewise, Vaughan & Bushnell claims that the design of its *California Framer*, available in 19 oz. and 23 oz. models (\$35), takes away the sting common in all-steel hammers by combining a wood and rubber *Shock-Blok* head insert with an air cushion grip handle. In brief tests here at *JLC*, the Anti-Vibe was clearly more convincing at reducing obvious hammer vibrations. Our only reservation with the Anti-Vibe is the thumb rest built into the top of the handle — a DIY detail on a tool labeled as contractor grade. Both the Anti-Vibe and the California Framer come in smooth and milled-face models.

In another design innovation, Estwing's all-steel *Hammertooth* hammer, retailing at just over \$30, has a tooth on the back side of the shaft that makes it possible to latch onto 2x lumber and torque one way or the other. This can really come in handy when using a pneumatic nail gun and framing with warped lumber — you can twist the lumber into alignment with the Hammertooth in one hand while operating the nail gun with the other. The Hammertooth comes with either smooth or milled striking faces. For securely hanging most rip-claw hammers on your tool belt, the *Hammerlock* hammer holster only releases a hammer when it has been rotated so that the handle points upwards.

Contact: Stanley Works, 1000 Stanley

Dr., New Britain, CT 06053; 800/782-6539; [www.stanleyworks.com](http://www.stanleyworks.com).

Vaughan & Bushnell Manufacturing Co., P.O. Box 390, Hebron, IL 60034; 815/648-2446.



Estwing Manufacturing Co., 2647 Eighth St., Rockford, IL 61109; 815/397-9558; [www.estwing.com](http://www.estwing.com).

## Wide-Jaw Adjustable Wrench

The standard bearer of adjustable wrenches now comes in models with 25% wider capacity. The new *Crescent Wrenches* come in 6-, 8-, 10-, and 12-inch models with jaw capacities ranging from  $\frac{15}{16}$  inch to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch. The new design also has wider handles and optional cushion grips. Prices range from \$13 to \$25.

Contact: Cooper Tools, P.O. Box 30100, Raleigh, NC 27612; 919/781-7200; [www.cooper-tools.com](http://www.cooper-tools.com).



## Miter Saw Stand

Combining sturdy 27- or 35-inch sawhorse legs with a clamp-on miter saw table and clamp-on 10-inch rollers, the *Workcenter* (\$100) is a simple and affordable miter saw stand. With the legs folded up, the entire system can be carried in one hand and



stored behind a truck seat. At the job site, the Workcenter goes together quickly, using a piece of 2x lumber as the cross beam.

*Contact:* Trojan Manufacturing, 9810 N. Vancouver Way, Portland, OR 97217; 800/745-2120; [www.europa.com/~trojan](http://www.europa.com/~trojan).

### Quick-Change Utility Knife

The *Nack* utility knife (\$20 including two loaded cartridges) holds 30 quick-change blades in a rotary cartridge housed in the rear of the grip. This tool will appeal to dry-wallers and others who wear blades out quickly. The knife does not have to be opened to change blades. Instead, the worn blade is retracted, the rotary cartridge is rotated one notch, and a new blade is instantly ready for use. On the downside, the blades are smaller and less rigid than conventional utility knife blades, and the knife won't fit in most tool pouches (a \$5 holster is available, but still...).



The *Nack* is available as a Tim Allen signature tool and as a Husky tool at Home Depot stores.

### Pneumatic Surface-Prep Tools

Remodelers who have to remove old vinyl flooring or chip away at built-up coatings or materials on walls, ceilings, or floors will appreciate the *MDF15* (\$695 list) and *MDF35* (\$735 list) long-reach air tools. These specialty tools produce 3,700 and 3,100 blows per second at 5 and 7.6 ft./lb. per blow, respectively. Weighing only ten pounds, the lighter-duty *MDF15* is comfortable for overhead use. An accessory kit (\$165 list) includes 1-, 2-, and 4-inch chisel bits and amoil point bit. Scraper blades and coating removal bits are available for the heavier-duty *MDF35*. As you can imagine, these tools use lots of air — 6 or 10.8 cfm at 90 psi depending on the model. An optional inline tool oiler is also available for use with both models.



*Contact:* General Equipment Company, P.O. Box 334, Owatonna, MN 55060; 800/533-0524; [www.general-equip.com](http://www.general-equip.com).

### Multi-Position Roller

Tired of twisting and turning when you paint into tight spots? Then get yourself a four-position *Flip Painter* mini-roller. With the push of a button you can rotate the roller arm to positive locking



positions every 90 degrees. Turn the roller arm straight out and it is well suited for horizontal strokes overhead or for painting tight spaces behind toilets and radiators. Turn the roller arm in towards the handle or to either side — whatever works best for a particular situation. The *Flip Painter* (\$8) comes with a 3/8-inch nap mini-roller.

**Contact:** Wooster Brush Co., P.O. Box 6010, Wooster, OH 44691; 800/392-7246; [www.woosterbrush.com](http://www.woosterbrush.com).

### Fish Tape Puller

Forcefully gripping and yanking a fish tape usually means putting on a pair of gloves or fiddling around with locking pliers. The *Grip-It* fish tape puller simply slides over the section of fish tape and provides a vise-like hold on the tape along with a comfortable hand grip that's easy to pull on. At \$11.50, it's probably worth a try even if you don't pull wire for a living.

**Contact:** Klein Tools, Inc., P.O. Box 599033, Chicago, IL 60659; 800/553-4676; [www.kleintools.com](http://www.kleintools.com).



### Improved Combi-Square

Boasting several useful features, the *Douglas Quad Square* is well worth its \$20 price tag. Oversized at 16 inches, the square can be used to mark completely across a 2x12. A pivoting arm adjusts from 0 to 45 degrees, allowing rafter layout for up to a 12/12 pitch.



The square blade is 1 1/2 inches wide, which works out perfectly for plate and joist hanger layout, and has handy roof layout tables written right on it. To top things off, the fixed arm of the square has a built-in spirit vial, so the square can be used like a torpedo level — or to find the pitch of an existing roof.

**Contact:** Douglas Tool Company, P.O. Box 1762, Woodinville, WA 98072; 425/487-2671; [www.quadsquare.com](http://www.quadsquare.com).

### Plunge-Cutting Drywall Saw

Here's a drywall saw you'll want to treat like a razor blade, not a butter knife. The *Pro-Rocker* has a 6-inch blade



with a very sharp, double-ground plunge tip. Attached to a comfortable contoured handle, the *Pro-Rocker* retails for about \$14.

**Contact:** Vaughan & Bushnell Manufacturing Co., P.O. Box 390, Hebron, IL 60034; 815/648-2446.

