

Plasti-Tacker Pro

by Rick Palmer

The NV50AP Plasti-Tacker Pro drives 1¹/₄-inch to 2-inch wire-collated nails with 1-inch plastic caps (see Figure 1). Every time you fire a nail, a plastic cap is automatically placed into position for



Figure 1. The Plasti-Tacker Pro makes fast work of 1¹/₄- to 2-inch nails with plastic caps.

the nail to hold it in place (Figure 2). The manufacturer (Hitachi Power Tools, 3950 Steve Reynolds Blvd., Norcross, GA 30093; 800/546-1666; www.hitachi.com) advertises that it can be used for house-wrap, insulation board, or roofing felt. As a roofer, the only use I had for this tool was drying in roofs. I agreed to try it out because if I can get a building dried in faster and easier, it benefits everyone.

Faster and Safer

My first impression was that this is a little complicated for a roofing tool, especially having to load collated plastic caps in one magazine and ring-shank nails in another (Figure 3). But with a little practice, loading the tool is a fairly quick and easy process, and the time you save as a result makes it more than worthwhile. For example, I dried in 30 squares of a 10/12 roof in seven hours working with a helper who never left the ground. The fact that it turns nail-

ing into a one-handed operation means you can hold onto the lanyard with one hand, stay on the roof, and nail with the other hand. After using this tool to dry in about 90 squares, I can say that this nailer is definitely a good idea, especially for roofs steeper than 6/12. On roofs of 3/12 or less, there isn't as much advantage because I can work just as fast with shiners and a coil nailer.

Plenty of Capacity

At 350 nails and plastic caps per roll, the capacity is another real benefit of the Plasti-Tacker Pro. I quit using regular plastic cap nails years ago because they are inconvenient if you are hand-driving them. They take up too much pouch space, and I got tired of crushing my fingers with the hammer. As a result, I ended up using shiners and a coil nailer, which is also a two-handed operation, and you run the risk of shooting your thumb with the nail gun.

The 7.4-pound Plasti-Tacker Pro seems to strike a good balance between light weight and durability. It had been very well-used by the time I got it, and I had no maintenance problems at all. I even dropped it off a one-story roof into the dirt, and nothing broke.

Collation Problems

The only problem I had with this tool involved the collation of the nails and caps. The cellophane tape that holds the plastic caps together sometimes sticks inside the reel so the caps stack up and jam, and sometimes the cellophane wraps around the nose of the gun, also causing a jam. An even greater problem is that the nail coils may be damaged during shipping (Figure 4). If the coils don't stay in the right shape, you end up with feed jams. If you open the box and find some of



Figure 2. The plastic caps are automatically fed down a track to the nose of the coil nailer.



Figure 3. Reloading is quick and easy with a little practice.



Figure 4. The only problems the author had with the Plasti-Tacker Pro were the result of collation. The nail coils shown here were bent during shipping, causing jams.

the coils of nails have been bent, you naturally use the good ones first because you don't feel like messing around with the bad ones. Then by the end of the box, when all you have left is these five bent-up coils, you end up just sitting there on the roof trying to get the rolls of nails back into shape instead of working. The manufacturer should provide paper or plastic sleeves of some sort to keep the coils round. The nails are pricey at \$5.63 per roll of

1¹/₄-inch and \$6 for the 2-inch (caps included). But weighed against the labor saved they are definitely worth the money. Even though you have to stop and fix things occasionally, the time this tool saves still puts you way ahead. Street price for the NV50AP is between \$412 and \$500.



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TOOLBITS

The Door Trim Guide

We've all used this type of saw guide — the homemade version works, but after it has gotten wet a few times in the back of your truck and then you pile stuff on top of it, it's junk. Only the worst pack rat takes that scrap of plywood from job to job, and once you do throw it out then you never want to take the time to make another — especially when you need just one cut.



The modern version of this site-built tool is the *Door Trim Guide*. Machined from plastic (similar to the type used on signs) to withstand wet weather and temperature extremes from -10°F to +140°F, and

flexible enough to take more abuse than a metal straightedge, this tool works with almost any saw or router. The first pass with the saw adjusts the guide to the proper width for that particular saw. After that, just line up the guide on the marks, clamp it down, and go.

It couldn't be any easier to use. You get a straight, accurate cut every time, right where you want it, and there is no problem with the saw shoe marring the face of the door. With a 36-tooth blade in the sidewinder, I could shave about ³/₃₂-inch off easily, and got a clean enough cut that after a couple of quick swipes with the 100-grit the door was good to go. I also used this tool as an edge-guide for the router while cutting some long dados, and it worked well.

As for durability, I haven't dropped my compressor on top of the Door Trim Guide yet, so I can't say for sure, but the scrap piece that was left over when I cut it to size looks flexible

enough to resist breaking. The Door Trim Guide is available in three lengths; the 4-foot sells for \$30, the 8-foot for \$60, and the 10-foot for \$90.

Contact: Pharosah, 18032-C Lemon Dr., Ste. 518, Yorba Linda, CA 92886; 714/792-3757; www.doortrimguide.com.

Get A Grip

A new line of trowels for concrete, brick, drywall, plastering, tile, and floor coverings is now available with the *ProForm Grip Handle*. The manufacturer claims a "no-turn" handle design which locks the handle to the mounting, cross-ground blades for a precision edge with a broken-in feel and, of course, a great grip.

Contact: Kraft Tool, 8325 Hedge Lane Terrace, Shawnee, KS 66227; 800/422-2448; www.krafttool.com.

