

Single-Nail Pneumatic Driver

by Dave Crosby

As a carpenter who has driven more than a few 20- or 30-penny spikes, I've often wondered when someone would invent a pneumatic tool to do the job. Well, someone has, and it works great.

The *Makita AG125* (\$339 from Makita USA, 14930 Northam St., LaMirada, CA 90638; 800-462-5482; www.makita-tools.com) handles bulk nails from 3 to 5 inches long, and will drive anything from 10-penny nails up to 40-penny spikes. Like a palm nailer, this tool accepts bulk nails and drives them with successive impacts, but you hold this driver like a regular nail gun. A built-in magnet ensures proper loading and alignment of the nail. At under three pounds, the tool is easy to control and comfortable, even in awkward positions. And it's small enough that there is plenty of room to toe-nail studs on 12-inch centers. The adjustable exhaust deflector keeps the air out of your face, too.

You're probably better off using a regular nail gun for nails up to 16-penny, but with larger nails, this gun shines. I timed it through several runs of ten nails each, driving 12-, 16-, 20-, 30-, and 40-penny nails into a spruce beam. The time it took to sink ten nails of each size ranged from 30 to 66 seconds. With a little practice, I think I could improve these times.

For a comparison, I then drove another batch of nails using a 28-ounce rig axe. While it's not hard to keep up with the gun for a few nails, sooner or later your arm gets tired and your grip starts slipping. But the nail driver keeps on plugging. I doubt anyone relishes the thought of driving more than 100 spikes in just a few minutes, but with the AG125 it's easy.

Like a palm nailer, this tool will not operate unless you provide enough forward pressure to engage the "contact arm," as the manual calls it. Unlike a

palm nailer, however, the AG125 has a trigger, which makes for a higher degree of accuracy and control. Pulling the trigger starts the nailing action, which continues until you let up on the forward pressure, even if you release the trigger. The multiple impacts do a good job of drawing two pieces of wood tightly together. The adjustable depth-of-drive makes it easy to place nails at exactly the right depth, without leaving any "elephant tracks" on the lumber.

Next I took this gun to a couple of job sites and really put it to the test. The more we used this tool, the more uses we found for it. We haven't tried driving duplex nails into forms yet, but it looks like it would work for that. We did manage to drive a bunch of "round-top" nails (long spiral-nails with a large metal washer) through foam into adobe to hold exterior metal lathe in place. With a little practice, it worked well and, if a different nose were available, it could be ideal for this purpose. It's also



The Makita AG125 Pneumatic Nail Driver uses multiple impacts to drive a variety of fasteners between 3 inches and 5 inches long.

the perfect tool for nailing up heavy headers where there's no room to swing a hammer.



Dave Crosby is the tool editor at the Journal of Light Construction. Special thanks to **Daniel Nicholls** of Sandrin Construction for his assistance with this article.



Compact size makes the AG125 ideal for nailing in tight places (above). It even worked well when used to drive spiral round-top nails through metal lathe, foam, and adobe (right). The Decade Vibration Reducing Gloves come from Chase Ergonomics (P.O. Box 92497, Albuquerque, NM 87199; 800/621-5436; www.chaseergo.com).

