

PORTABLE Miter-Saw Stands



Look for stability,
easy setup, and a
well-designed stop

I use a miter saw almost every day, but until recently I'd never owned a really satisfactory stand. The homemade stands I've tried over the years were invariably heavy, bulky, and difficult

by Jeremy Hess

to move around, so I usually found myself setting up the saw on the floor and using 2x4 blocks as stock supports. Although that produces good results, it's both inefficient and hard on your knees and back. I finally decided it was time to invest in a good manufactured saw stand.

As a remodeler, I need a stand that's versatile enough to handle both my 10-inch Delta compound saw and my 12-inch DeWalt sliding saw.

Changing from one saw to another has to be quick and easy, because I need to do that fairly often. The stand also has to fit in the back of my truck and leave room for tools and materials. Finally, it must be rugged enough to handle the weight of long joists and rafters, not just lightweight trim.

As I began shopping around, I quickly learned that the term "miter-saw stand" means different things to different people. Some manufacturers classify universal tool stands and portable workbenches as miter-saw stands, even though a professional builder would be unlikely to use them in that capacity. For this article, I decided to zero in

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AD&E Sawhelper Ultrafence

This well-designed stand is made up of three components: a four-legged folding table that supports the saw and two support wings with an integral stop system. The legs on the support tables are adjustable to compensate for uneven ground, and the two support wings fasten to self-aligning brackets that are permanently bolted to the side of the saw. According to the manufacturer, the brackets are accurate to 1/100 of an inch. I found that the tables stayed perfectly aligned, and the calibrated flip-up stop that comes with the stand is also dead-on every time. The stop can be used on either side of the saw, and the supplied stick-on tape measures make setting it to a measurement quick and easy. The solid, continuous aluminum table eliminates the need to move a support to cut stock of varying lengths.

This stand can be ordered with two different-size tables from a choice of 5-foot, 8-foot, and 9-foot-4-inch. Because

the specified lengths are measured from the blade, the tables themselves are somewhat shorter than those dimensions. I found the 9-foot-4-inch table a snug fit in the 8-foot bed of my truck. If you plan on using two different saws with this stand, you'll need to order an extra set of wing mounts (\$35) for your other saw. If you're using a saw with an auxiliary fence that slides to permit bevel cuts, you'll need to remove the fence or cut the top of the extension wing to allow clearance. Also, with the mounting brackets bolted on, I found that I couldn't use the crown stops for my DeWalt 12-inch sliding saw.

Overall, however, this is an excellent system that doesn't take up too much space and readily handles stock of almost any size.

Contact: American Design and Engineering, St. Paul Park, Minn.; 800/441-1388, www.sawhelper.com.



Sawhelper's extension wings mount with self-aligning brackets (above) that provide an extremely precise stop system. The manufacturer claims it to be accurate within .01 inch. Its best feature is the integral stop system (left). The applied measuring tape makes the stop useful for all cuts, not just repetitive ones.

Delta 50-155

Of the stands I examined, the Delta had the largest footprint when folded. Plus, when you bolt a saw to the already heavy stand, the weight climbs to almost 140 pounds. That's two significant drawbacks for those who frequently work alone or have limited truck space. Once you get it out of the truck, though, the Delta's 12-inch rubber wheels and padded handle make moving the folded stand easy, even with a lot of scrap material or mud in the way.

The legs lock solidly into place when folded, although they lack an adjustment to compensate for uneven ground. Stabilizers bolted to the back of the rear legs prevent the stand from tipping over backwards. The roller-type work supports are easy to adjust and provide good support; an anti-lift finger keeps the long cutoffs from kicking up once the saw has passed through them. This stand is the only one I reviewed that has a built-in cord wrap.

On the other hand, the small support table, which includes the stop system, wouldn't work with my 12-inch sliding compound saw. The stop system has a maximum capacity of only 26 inches.

Contact: Delta, Jackson, Tenn.; 800/438-2486, www.deltamachinery.com.



The Delta 50-155's comfortable handle and big wheels make it easy to move around the job site, but getting it into the truck is complicated by its substantial size and weight. The 26-inch maximum capacity of the Delta's stop system (left) limits it to cutting blocking or cripple studs, and its hollow design is unsuitable for cutting mitered stock.

DeWalt DW723

This stand weighs a mere 35 pounds and collapses to only 66 inches in length, but it's extremely rugged and stable. On level ground it handled even my heavy slide saw with ease. The quick-release clamps that hold the saw in place are easy to use, making it simple to switch from one saw to another.

The bar-type stock supports have flip-up stops that run the full width of the support and stay accurate even after many repetitive cuts. With the saw at the far right of the stand and the extension at the far left, the stop will accept up to 8-foot stock. The two supports are easily moved from the extensions to the main beam of the stand to provide ample support even with shorter stock. This is a nice feature, but the supports seemed slightly too small; enlarging them would provide more solid support to wide material.

An adjustable leg to eliminate wobble on uneven surfaces would be another welcome addition. The carrying handle on the stand I was testing soon broke; although DeWalt quickly sent a replacement, it would be nice to see a stronger handle.

Contact: DeWalt, Hamstead, Md.; 800/433-9258, www.dewalt.com.

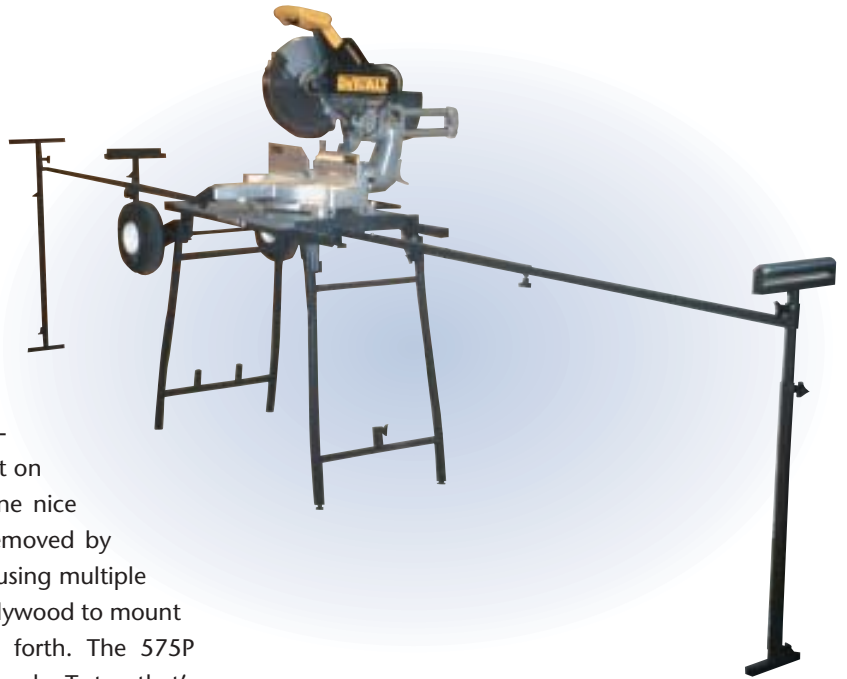


The DeWalt's quick-release mounting system is easy to use and locks positively to the stand (above), simplifying transport. A full-width flip-up stop (left) keeps miters from slipping past, but the stand's compact design limits the maximum stop setting to 8 feet.

HTC 575P

The 575P from HTC Products is a well-made stand, and the components store on board when it's folded for transport. Even though it weighs nearly 70 pounds, the collapsed stand rolls easily. Relocating the stand while it's set up is definitely a two-person job, though. If you must move it by yourself, you'll have to break it down first. I found that to be inconvenient because it means the entire stand has to be set up again and leveled. An adjustable leg is convenient for stabilizing the stand on uneven surfaces, although the small feet will need to rest on blocks if you're working on soft ground. One nice feature is that the MDF saw base can be removed by loosening a couple of wing nuts. If you'd be using multiple saws on this stand, you could cut a piece of plywood to mount your other saw and swap them back and forth. The 575P includes a roller support, a bar-type support, and a T-stop that's used as a stop or an extra support.

Contact: HTC Products, Inc., Royal Oak, Mich.; 800/624-2027.



Moving the HTC while it's folded is easy. All its parts fit into a single unit, and air-filled tires cushion the ride. The HTC has useful roller and bar-type supports. The position of the tires makes the stand hard to move while it's set up: It requires another person to help, or you'll have to break it down, which takes a few minutes. The adjustable middle support can be raised slightly to function as a stop (below left).



Iowa Manufacturing Stablemate

The Stablemate stand comes completely assembled in the box. Putting it to work was simply a matter of bolting my 10-inch saw to the plywood base and attaching the mounting clamps. Weighing in at 48 pounds without the saw, it's a relatively lightweight tool. Although the wheels bolted to the legs make it easy to roll the stand into the back of a truck, they are too small to be useful when moving it across anything but a smooth surface. The Stablemate is rock solid when set up, even under the weight of a heavy 12-inch sliding saw. The mounting base uses two crank-operated clamps that make it easy to get the saw on and off and allow you to use the saw by itself with the base attached. This stand would be excellent for anyone with limited space and a tight budget. It's sturdy, well constructed, and easy to use right out of the box.

Contact: Iowa Manufacturing, Battle Creek, Iowa; 800/882-4422, www.stablemateonline.com.



The Stablemate's crank-type clamps make it convenient to mount and remove the saw and its base from the stand. The mounting brackets act as short legs, making it possible to use the saw separately from the stand without unbolting it from the base (above).

Rousseau HD2950

Even though together they weigh more than 140 pounds, this was the only stand I could load into my truck by myself without removing the saw first. It slid in pretty easily when I placed one end on the tailgate and lifted the other. The stand has leveling legs and 10-inch pneumatic tires that are mounted on the bottom of the legs, allowing you to relocate the stand without completely collapsing it. The legs for the support rollers store on the collapsed stand, eliminating the need for extra trips to the truck.

The basic stand, however, is a pretty bare-bones piece of equipment. It comes with only one roller support on each side, so cutting different-length stock would require constant adjustment. The optional support wing (part no. 6112, \$103) and fence-stop system (part no. 6000, \$120) with calibrated stops made this stand very easy to use. (Both parts come in right- and left-hand versions, which are sold separately.) I would suggest buying both the support wing and the stop system, although that takes the total price to over



\$500 and makes this the most expensive stand in the test. The saw bolts directly to the stand's table, making it troublesome to switch saws.

Contact: Rousseau Co., Clarkston, Wash.; 800/635-3416, www.rousseauco.com.



Rousseau's stand was the only one the author could put in the truck by himself with the saw still on it. Tilt it back until the front legs rest on the tailgate, lift the other end, and slide it forward. The stop system (left) is among the best, but it isn't included in the base stand and adds \$120 to the cost. The calibrated stops are accurate and easy to use.

TracRac TracMaster

At 35 pounds, this stand is light and portable. Even with my saw bolted on, I could move it easily by myself. The mounting platform slides into the stand from one end; feet on the bottom of the platform make it possible to use the saw independent of the stand. An included flip-up stop uses reliable cam-type locks that didn't budge during repetitive cuts. I had some doubts about the long-term durability of the plastic supports, but the manufacturer assured me that they've never been known to break during normal use.

This was the only stand I reviewed that offered a second work support as an option, and if I were going to buy this stand, I would buy an additional work support for the other side of the saw (part no. 24301, about \$50). That's important for safety as well as convenience: Without the support, a cutoff piece could lift up, or the piece could splinter before the saw passes all the way through it. Omitting the second support just doesn't make sense. I'm sure that's why the manufacturer made a point of including the optional support in the stand it provided for testing.

Contact: TracRac, Inc., Fall River, Mass.; 800/501-1587, www.tracrac.com.



The TracMaster's stock supports are easy to adjust and lock solidly, but for some reason the manufacturer provides only one per unit. The necessary second support costs an extra \$50.

Trojan MS2000

This stand offers exceptional mobility. Even with its 154-inch capacity, the unit can be easily relocated without having to reset the tables and extensions. There's ample room to grab the stand when it's being moved in the collapsed position, and its small legs provide good support when you set it down.

One idiosyncrasy of the Trojan MS2000 has to do with the set-up procedure. It involves standing the unit on its wheels and using your leg to control it. If you have fairly short legs, as I do, this poses quite a challenge the first few times you try it. The stand comes with a pair of table-type stock supports, which include rollers mounted close to the saw itself and extensions farther out. While the main tables are very strong, I was a bit leery of the extensions, which are made from 1/2-inch square tubing. Placing a heavy board on the extension alone, without the added support of the main table, could cause the extension to bend. Despite that minor quibble, the large capacity and excellent mobility of this stand would make it an excellent piece of equipment for both shop and field use.

Contact: Trojan Manufacturing, Inc.,
Portland, Ore.; 800/745-2120, www.trojantools.com.



The MS2000 has an impressive 154-inch capacity when set up but folds to wheelbarrow size. The 1/2-inch tubular stock on its extension tables seems a little flimsy and might bend if subjected to a heavy load.

Trojan Workcenter

At just 30 pounds, the Trojan Workcenter was the lightest and least expensive stand tested. The design couldn't be much simpler: A length of user-supplied 2x6 forms the backbone of the stand, with two of Trojan's sturdy sawhorse legs forming the base. The legs securely pinch the 2x6, and the saw platform slips over the 2x6 with the saw mounted on top. (Rather than bolting or screwing the saw to the MDF platform, I secured it with a couple of C-clamps so I could also use the saw without the stand.) The Workcenter includes two adjustable support rollers that are secured to the lumber frame with thumbscrews. The legs can be used to make a sturdy sawhorse when they're not in use as part of the saw stand, and the support rollers can be set up to provide outfeed support for ripping long stock with a table saw. The Workcenter lacks a stop system, and because it consists of a number of separate parts, everything has to be carried separately when it's disassembled. Even so, I liked this stand a lot. Its versatile components and low cost make it an attractive option for builders who want a lot of bang for the buck.

Contact: Trojan Manufacturing, Inc., Portland, Ore.; 800/745-2120, www.trojantools.com.



The Trojan Workcenter's no-frills design relies on a 2x6 to support the saw base. It clamps securely and allows the user to vary the length of the stand as needed, depending on the length of the 2x6 selected.



Although the Workcenter breaks down into a number of separate units, all the components (excluding the saw) will fit neatly behind the seat of a pickup. When the saw stand is not in use, the folding sawhorse legs and rollers can be used for other tasks.

Miter-Saw Stand Specifications

Manufacturer	AD&E	Delta	DeWalt	HTC	Iowa Mfg.	Rousseau	TracRac	Trojan	Trojan
Model	Sawhelper Ultrafence	50-155	DW723	575P	Stablemate	HD2950	TracMaster	MS2000	Workcenter
Price	\$430	\$229	\$229	\$250	\$150	\$300	\$175	\$360	\$123
Weight	80 lbs.	65 lbs.	35 lbs.	70 lbs.	48 lbs.	70 lbs.	35 lbs.	60 lbs.	35 lbs.
Height	36"	34"	36"	35"	36"	36"	34"	36"	36"
Overall Length	Varies	112"	150"	168"	46"-106"	144"	56"	156"	n/a, user-supplied, 2x6
Out of the Box	Good, 45 min.	Fair, many parts, 1 1/2 hours	Excellent, 15 min.	Excellent, 15 min.	Excellent, 15 min.	Good, 45 min.	Good, 30 min.	Excellent, 15 min.	Excellent, 15 min.
Setup & Tear-down	Easy, saw removes	Easy, self-contained	Easy, self-contained, saw removes	Easy, self-contained	Easy, self-contained	Easy, self-contained	Excellent, saw removes	Good, self-contained, need long legs	Excellent
Stability in Shop	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Stability on Grass	Fair, no adjustment	Fair	Fair, no adjustment	Excellent, thread-out feet	Fair, no adjustment	Excellent, adjustable legs	Excellent, adjustable leg	Fair, no adjustment	Fair, no adjustment
Mobility	Good, moves in 4 pieces	Excellent, 12" tires, padded handle	Good, handle, no wheels	Excellent, 10" pneumatic tires	Good, small wheels	Excellent, 10" pneumatic tires	Excellent, lightweight	Excellent, 10" tires	Good, very light
Truck Test	Excellent	Fair, heavy, takes up a lot of space	Excellent	Good, large	Excellent	Excellent, large, easy to load	Excellent	Fair, large, heavy to lift	Excellent, fits behind seat
Universal Saw Mount	Need additional mounts for more than 1 saw	Yes, hardboard	Yes, quick-release	Yes, MDF, removable	Yes, removable	Yes, MDF	Yes, hardboard	Yes, MDF top	Yes, MDF top
Support Type	Full tables	Rollers, small table	Bars	Bar, roller, T-stop	Bars	Rollers	Bar, only 1	Ladder type	Roller
Fence	Yes, continuous	Yes, small table	No	No, optional	Yes, flip-up	No, optional	No	No, optional	No
Stop	Excellent, flip-up	Limited to 26"	Yes, 2 flip-ups	Yes, optional	Yes, flip-up	No, optional	Yes	No, optional	No
Standard Accessories	2 tables in various lengths, calibrated flip-up stop	Short support table with stop, 2 support rollers, cord wrap, parts for mounting 10" and 12" saws	Adjustable quick-release supports with flip-up stops (2)	1 roller, 1 bar, 1 T-stop, self-storing components	Flip-up fence, flip-up stop, left & right extension arms	1 roller support for each side	One work support, flip-up stop		
Optional Accessories	Tables available in 3 lengths		Additional support/stops	60" table with fence, 2 flip-up stops	6' extension support, shelf brackets	60" fence with flip-up stop, 61" rigid stock support wing, 5' extension arm	Additional work support	Extension wing with legs	None

on dedicated portable miter-saw stands that could handle a variety of saws, transport easily, and stand up to contractor use.

I found nine stands that seemed to fill the bill. They all promised to fit most saws, and they represented a variety of price points. They looked as if they'd be good at most miter-saw tasks, and while they offered varying degrees of portability, all could be moved fairly easily by one person.

Features to Look For

As I began a hands-on evaluation of the stands I'd selected, I kept several criteria in mind. First was portability. It doesn't matter how well a stand works if it's too big and heavy to be practical on the job site. Does it have wheels? Can I move it while it's assembled, or do I have to break it down?

Saw stops. One of the most important benefits of a saw stand is its ability to speed production. A well-designed stop is a great convenience when it comes to making accurate repetitive cuts. All the stops I tested held their position well, even when bumped repeatedly with 2x6 studs.

The best-designed stops extend the full width of the work supports, allowing accurate cuts even with mitered stock. Some stops allow the point of a miter to slip past, throwing accuracy out the window. It isn't a problem with square stock, but if you do a lot of trim work, it could be an important consideration.

Stock supports. There are two basic types of stock supports: roller- or bar-type supports and table supports. Supports that use a single roller or bar tend to be lighter and more portable. They come in handy when you're lining up a heavy length of pressure-treated lumber. On the other hand, rollers can make it difficult to pull measurements by hooking a tape to the end of the stock, and they require frequent adjustments if you're cutting stock to significantly different lengths. Table-type supports offer optimum support but are heavier and frequently have to be transported in several pieces.

Some stock supports have their own legs; others have legs that cantilever out from the side of the stand. Separate legs mean that you'll need to spend a little extra time to get everything level,

but they can support the most weight. Cantilever supports don't require extra set-up time, but generally they aren't quite as sturdy.


Switching saws. Ease of mounting is another important consideration. Some stands use brackets or quick-release clamps to simplify switching from one saw to another. The best of these made such changeovers practically effortless. At the other extreme are stands that require the user to bolt the saw in place. This approach provides a solid mount, but it's not practical if you expect to use the stand with more than one saw.

Making a Choice

As a remodeler, I might be on two or three different jobs in the course of a week, so I need a lightweight stand that sets up quickly. The DeWalt filled the bill on both accounts, and it's a purchase I've been very happy with. I can carry the stand by myself without bashing holes in the walls of my customers' homes, and it fits in my truck bed with some room left over for building materials. The saw base's quick-release clamps work well, and with an additional set of clamps I can mount my other saw without a hassle. The stock supports and saw base are flexible in their placement, and the stop system works better than those on other lightweight stands.

Carpenters who work on bigger projects with no portability or space restrictions would probably find the Sawhelper, Trojan MS2000, or Rousseau the best tool. All three handle heavy loads and have ample surface area to support bigger stock. The Sawhelper was my favorite of these. It handles long stock and comes standard with the best stop system of any of the stands I reviewed.

In my opinion, the value winner is the Trojan Workcenter. It's inexpensive, light, and sturdy, and its components can be used separately for other tasks.

If you purchase a stand, I recommend looking into some of the accessories. Most stands can be made more useful and versatile by adding an extra extension table, support, or stop. 

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