

Deck-Bar Medley

Duckbill DW-1 Deck Wrecker
Forrester Mfg.
866/256-4499
www.deckwrecker.com
Street price: \$60

FuBar
The Stanley Works
800/782-6539
www.stanleyworks.com
Street price: \$40

Gutster Demo-Bar
The Gutster
732/868-8303
www.thegutster.com
Street price: \$70

Tweaker
Mayhew Steel Products
800/872-0037
www.mayhew.com
Street price: \$30

by Mike Guertin

I do as much re-decking as new-deck building, so I'm just as likely to be ripping off old PT decking as I am to be straightening out new joists. Having the right tools for both jobs saves time (and my back).

Decking Demo

Unlike many general-purpose wrecking bars, the Duckbill Deck Wrecker by Forrester is single-minded in its mission: removing deck boards. The upright design and 51-inch handle give me tremendous leverage to effortlessly rip off decking — and I don't have to bend over. Welded to the fulcrum head are two steel plates spaced 3¼ inches apart to straddle single or doubled-up

joists; the plates slide beneath the deck boards and lift them off the joists. The bottom of the handle is offset 30 degrees and the fulcrum head, held on by a detent ring pin, can be reset for optimal pushing or pulling leverage.

I usually start a demo by removing boards from the outside edge of the deck, and then I work back toward the building. To remove the first 3 feet of boards, I stand on the decking, with my back to the house, and push the Deck Wrecker. Then, facing the house, I work off a plank laid across the cleared joists. With the Deck Wrecker

head reversed, I pull on the handle to tear off the rest of the decking, right up to the wall.

When I'm working alone, I make two passes along each board. On the first pass, I ease each board one-third to one-half of the way up at each joist. On the second pass, I pop the boards off. If two guys work together, each with a Deck Wrecker, one can ease the board halfway up at each joist, moving down the line, as the second guy follows right behind, lifting the board free.

Unlike the Deck Wrecker, the Gutster Demo Bar isn't specifically



Duckbill DW-1 Deck Wrecker



Stanley FuBar



Gutster Demo-Bar



Tweaker

DUCKBILL DECK WRECKER AND STANLEY FUBAR PHOTOS BY DAVID SHARPE

made for removing decking, but it works in a similar fashion. It has two 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide steel plates set 2 inches apart that straddle joists and slip beneath the decking. The steel handle is about 40 inches long and offset from the plates slightly. You'll have to bend over, though, to use the Gutster to pry off the decking, and it works in only one direction — moving toward the decking.

I've also used the Gutster for a variety of other demolition jobs (drywall, subfloor, and siding removal), and to loosen earth and excavate around rocks when digging footing holes.

Taming Twisty Joists

I frame decks with southern yellow pine, which tends to go a little wild at times, especially when left sitting in an unrestrained pile. Straightening out twisted joists during installation used to be a pain until I happened upon a couple of specialty pry bars.

The first was the Tweaker made by Mayhew. The business end has a C-shaped jaw that grips the edge of a joist. The in-line foot-long handle gives plenty of leverage to "right" an errant joist end. After I secure one end of the joist in a hanger, or with a few more nails than usual, I use the Tweaker to adjust the opposite end upright — then nail it.

The F-shaped head of Stanley's multipurpose FuBar grips around joists the same way as the Tweaker, and an offset design gives you a little more leverage. The back of the "F" has a striking face for pounding, and the handle end is a pry bar with nail-pulling slots — making it a good all-around tool for demolition and construction.

Mike Guertin is a builder and remodeler in East Greenwich, R.I., and a siding, roofing, and deck specialist at Hanley Wood's JLC Live, DeckExpo, and Remodeling shows.

Variable Geometry Reciprocating Saw

Model 9750 Tiger Claw
Porter Cable
800/487-8665
www.portercable.com
Street price: \$200

by John Wilder

The Porter Cable Tiger Claw reciprocating saw reminds me of a kid's transformer toy. It has universal joints engineered into it so the head can rotate 180 degrees and the blade can rotate 360 degrees — which means that instead of contorting your body into a tight place, you can contort the

for a church summer camp in Minnesota. Moving ice had collapsed a deck down by the lake, and the camp, being short on money, wanted to save the boards for reuse.

Backing out the screws didn't work, but by setting the Tiger Claw into the "L" position, I was able to place the blade between the joist and the deck boards and cut through the screws. It saved a lot of lumber and a lot of volunteer man-hours.

The Tiger Claw's toolless blade change is simplicity itself. At 11.5 amps, the saw is near the top of the



tool. The older I get, the more important this becomes.

My favorite configuration has the head rotated 90 degrees, to make ground-level cutting more comfortable. I can squat and flush cut a post without lying down or scraping my hands against the dirt; also, I can more easily work overhead.

Removing deck boards is a job the Tiger Claw shines at; I used it for this purpose when I volunteered to work

competition in power; I have never found it to be inadequate in even the heaviest of applications. I've used and abused mine for 3 years. It's scratched up, but I have never had to service it. The only possible improvement I can imagine would be the addition of an orbital cutting action for a more aggressive cut.

John Wilder is a deck builder in Jacksonville, Fla.

Pneumatic Nail Remover

Nail Kicker, Model NR101-V1
Reconnx
888/447-3873
www.nailkicker.com
Street price: \$250

by Rodney Brooks



the nail to be in alignment with the ejection path. When the nail is straight and the board is supported, pulling the tool's trigger delivers several blows, or kicks, to the nail.

When I denailed some southern yellow pine using the NailKicker, just one or two kicks drove the nails level with the surface. Unfortunately, the drive pin would dent the wood on the last blow, and I still had to flip the boards and lever the nails out with a claw hammer or a long-handled pair of nippers. Even so, the Nail Kicker saved a significant amount of time and trouble.

The tool is the size of a brad nailer without its magazine. The trigger has a safety, but it should also have a trigger guard. My gloves often caught and closed the safety.

The instructions were clear, well written, and nicely

illustrated. The section on safety is a must-read, as some nails do fly and ricochet across the yard; one recommendation is to use a soft-sided enclosure to catch ejected nails.

I like this tool a lot. It saves hundreds of hammer blows, even on the deformed shank nails used on decks, and can also drive out deck screws. ♦

Rodney Brooks is a deck builder who focuses on green building issues in Greenville, S.C.

One approach to green building is reusing materials, rather than automatically putting them in a dumpster. Given the labor involved in removing nails from demoed lumber, however, this environmentally sensitive approach is sometimes not economically practical. That is, it's cheaper to buy new.

But with the NailKicker, you can at least remove the nails a lot faster. Its hollow nose slides over the sharp end of a protruding nail, so you can lever