

## DeWalt 745 Table Saw

by Greg DiBernardo

While portable table saws have been on job sites for decades, their portability tended to come at the expense of accuracy — particularly the accuracy of the fence. Carpenters became accustomed to pulling out a tape, measuring tooth-to-fence, and persuading the rickety fence parallel to the blade every time it was moved.

Then DeWalt pioneered a rack-and-pinion fence on its DW744 portable table saw. This allows the carpenter to calibrate the fence to the measuring scale on the table just once, then use a knob to move the fence to the desired setting very quickly, with certainty that it will remain parallel to the blade. The innovation has made the DW744 popular with many carpenters.

A major drawback to the DW744, however, is its size and weight. While there are heavier portable saws on the market, the DeWalt DW744 is no lightweight: Moving it around on a big job or packing it in a cramped truck can be daunting.

Enter DeWalt's new DW745 10-inch portable table saw (street price \$370). It sports the most important features of the larger DW744 (and a few more), but is smaller and weighs nearly 20 pounds less. In fact, the saw is reminiscent in size and weight of the venerable Makita 2703, which for years held the unofficial title of lightest table saw a carpenter could use without being laughed off a job site.

### Rip Capacity

Aside from its light weight, the DW745's most notable feature is its fence, which is identical in function to the DW744's but has a smaller rip capacity (16 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches vs. 24 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches).

Although some may see the smaller rip capacity as a drawback, it's essentially a tradeoff for those looking for lighter weight (45 pounds vs. 64 pounds). How often is a portable table saw used to knock down full-sized sheet goods, anyway? Even on the larger portable table saws, getting a precise cut while you're maneuvering big sheets is extremely difficult. Besides, many carpenters



At 45 pounds and with grip recesses on both sides, the new DW745 can be carried like a suitcase.

are turning to the new circular-saw rail systems for this type of work. More often than not, they are using their portable table saws for ripping narrow trim boards and moldings.

One recent trend has been to make so-called “portable” table saws bigger and heavier, to the point that elaborate stands are needed to move them around. But then, how large a saw does one need to rip  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch off a 1x6? The DW745 makes no compromises in accuracy or power for the sake of portability, yet I can easily carry it by one of its two handles, as I would a briefcase.

**No dedicated saw stand.** The DW745 is mounted on a tubular base that also protects the undercarriage. It sits on four nonskid rubber feet; the rear feet are adjustable to compensate for out-of-level work surfaces. Since there's no dedicated stand for the saw, I use the one from my DW744, with a piece of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plywood added as a support surface. This setup isn't perfect, but it works without modification and puts the saw at a comfortable height.

The DW745 is also easy to set up on sawhorses.



The rack and pinion fence is accurate and holds its settings well, according to the author. Rip capacity is 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches.

### Power

Despite its smaller size, the 15-amp motor has plenty of power and runs somewhat more smoothly and quietly than the DW744's. The new saw has no trouble cutting wet 2-by lumber, as long as you slow the feed rate as needed. Even though the tool seems to have power to spare, DeWalt does not recommend running it with dado blades.

The throat plates are identical to and interchangeable with those of the DW744, as are the miter gauge and the 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-inch dust port.

### Setup and Calibration

Calibrating the DW745 is relatively straightforward, especially if you're familiar with the DW744. Fortunately, the fence alignment from the factory was perfect on the saw I bought. But if you do have to realign the fence to keep it parallel to the blade, the only tool you'll need is a screwdriver. Adjustment entails unlocking the fence, loosening two screws under the rail, lining up the fence with the miter gauge slot for the length of the table, and retightening the screws.

The measuring indicator is also easy to reset, with the usual two screws. You fine-tune the blade bevel by adjusting the stops for 0 and 45 degrees; my saw was dead-on accurate out of the box.



There is no dedicated stand for the DW745, so the author uses the stand from its predecessor, the 744.

I've found the tool to be quite rugged; it holds its calibrations well despite being bumped around during transit.

### Other Features

DeWalt must have been listening when owners griped about the DW744's lack of a cord wrap — the DW745 has one neatly tucked into the side of the saw body. Since the wrap doesn't protrude beyond the saw's tubular frame, the cord is well-protected from damage.

The company should also be applauded for including a push stick with

the saw. In the past, some manufacturers have provided a template for crafting a push stick from wood. But DeWalt has not only included an effective push stick, it's also provided on-board storage on the right side of the saw — so the stick is always within reach when you're making a cut. Now there's no excuse to risk your fingers.

### Drawbacks

Overall, the DeWalt is a well-thought-out, nicely built saw, but I do have a few minor quibbles.

## Toolbox | DeWalt 745 Table Saw

First, it should have a soft-start motor and an electronic brake. These items are standard fare on many other tools, and the technology is readily available.

Second, there is no on-board storage for the included miter gauge.

Finally, the blade guard is the standard type that most carpenters throw out the day they unpack a saw from the box — because it gets in the way more than it helps. Don't discard it, though: DeWalt requires that the blade guard be included with the unit if the saw ever needs warranty service.

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Additional features include a dust port, a push stick that stows on board, and a safe place to wrap the cord.



**New Hue.** The first thing you'll notice about Makita's latest cordless drill is the color: white. With the *BDF452HW* — part of the company's new compact cordless line — Makita has abandoned its traditional blue-green scheme. The drill provides 450 inch-pounds of torque yet weighs just 3½ pounds, including the battery. Noteworthy features include a one-handed chuck, a built-in LED work light that stays on for about 10 seconds when you tap the trigger, and a sophisticated charger that can bring the 18-volt lithium ion pack to a full charge in 15 minutes. A kit with two batteries and a case sells for \$200 on the Web.

**Makita**, 800/462-5482, [www.makita.com](http://www.makita.com). **Circle #12**

**Versatile Pack.** Some contractors have resisted going to a new lithium ion battery platform because they don't want to replace all their cordless tools. But users of Milwaukee's 18-volt system don't have to replace anything, because the new *V18* lithium ion packs also work in the company's 18-volt nicad tools. According to Milwaukee, the packs — which do require a new charger — last up to 50 percent longer than nicad batteries and charge in about an hour. They boast a built-in fuel gauge that lets the user see the status of the pack before climbing onto the roof or into the crawlspace. Two *V18* batteries and a charger sell for about \$210.

**Milwaukee**, 800/729-3878, [www.milwaukeetool.com](http://www.milwaukeetool.com).

**Circle #13**



**Overachiever.** Hitachi claims that its *HXP* lithium ion batteries can endure 1,300 to 1,500 charging cycles — three times more than an 18-volt nicad or niMH pack can withstand. The company has made its new packs compatible with its older tools — but if you need a new cordless drill anyway, check out the *DV18DL* 18-volt cordless hammer drill. It provides 570 inch-pounds of torque, includes a five-position belt hook with a built-in LED light, and weighs a little less than 5 pounds. With two batteries and a case, the drill sells for about \$300. An 18-volt *HXP* battery costs \$110.

**Hitachi**, 800/829-4752, [www.hitachipowertools.com](http://www.hitachipowertools.com).

**Circle #14**

## Toolbox | Ladders

**Features Galore.** Werner has added a model designed for GCs to its popular Jobstation line of ladders. The *Contractor's Jobstation* sports a bucket hook and a large magnet on its molded top for tools and fasteners. But its best feature is the "Tool Lasso," which can hold any tool with a reasonably sized handle. Three Lassos are included with each ladder; a matching belt hook is sold separately. The 375-pound-capacity Jobstation comes in 6-foot (\$140) and 8-foot (\$170) sizes.

**Werner**, 888/523-3370, [www.wernerladder.com](http://www.wernerladder.com). **Circle #15**



**Jack of All Trades.** With six possible positions as a stepladder, 12 as an extension ladder, and 15 as a stairwell ladder — plus five scaffold heights — Cosco's 25-foot *World's Greatest Ladder* may just be the most versatile ladder available. Its surprising utility makes it a favorite of home inspectors. It features slip-resistant rungs, toolless adjustments, a Type 1A 300-pound rating, and a lifetime warranty. You can find it on the Web for about \$400.

**Cosco**, 888/818-5110, [www.coscoproducts.com](http://www.coscoproducts.com). **Circle #17**



**Firm Grip.** Perching an extension ladder against a slippery aluminum gutter is a shaky proposition. Unfortunately, most ladder stabilizers aren't made to lean against the roof — with one notable exception, the *Ladder-Max*. According to the manufacturer, this device is the only stabilizer approved by OSHA for roof placement. At about 8 pounds, it allegedly fits every major brand of extension and articulated ladder. It costs \$60.

**Ladder-Max**, 866/772-4223, [www.ladder-max.com](http://www.ladder-max.com). **Circle #16**