

## Compact and Powerful Table Saw

### DW745 10-Inch Table Saw

DeWalt

800/433-9258

dewalt.com

Street price: \$370

Circle #1

by Mark Clement

Back in the day, portable table saws used to actually be portable. Today, most job-site table saws are, well, not portable. Not easily, anyway. And while the upgrades these super-sized saws bring to the table are undeniably terrific, I don't need all the bells and whistles to rip deck boards, make a quick spindle, or size 1x8.

DeWalt's DW745 nicely re-invents the category — it's smaller than most other table saws, delivering a plush mix of old-school portability and some truly useful modern detailing.

Contributing to the portability are molded rubber grips under the table, which enable you to carry the roughly 50-pound saw like a tray or a brief case. If you're an urban deck builder (think roof decks on walk-ups: staircases, landings, multiple door passages), you'll be thankful every time you don't gouge the walls getting the saw to the deck. And on site, it consumes a tiny footprint. If you're working in backyards, you'll be equally grateful for how heavy the DW745 isn't.

Start-up is abrupt and the motor is loud, but so what? The saw muscles through gnarly framing lumber and hardwoods with no trouble. I like the included construction-grade blade. Finer work, however, requires a finer

blade (I use Freud's Fusion) to minimize saw marks.

The DW745 cut straight and square out of the box. I did wish the blade was a bit more forward in the table. The space between the front edge of the tool and the blade feels short, but I got used to it. For safety, I use the saw's rail as a limiter for my hand: In other words, I feed the stock until my knuckles hit the front rail, then re-adjust my grip.

The tall aluminum fence is solid, which I appreciated when ripping 2-by on edge. The fence adjustment works from under the saw table and took some getting used to, but I came to love it. The front and back rails move together on a rack-and-pinion system, and the fence is fixed to the rails, rendering it dead square every time. I noticed, though, that crew members who weren't familiar with the saw wouldn't ask how to adjust the fence. They just released the fence's installation clips, moved the fence, then re-tightened the clips. It's not ideal, but I don't see a safety problem.

Both the depth-adjustment crank



and the miter release-and-lock lever work well. Tipping the blade-and-motor assembly and locking it at 45 degrees is a snap. The on/off switch is easy to find without looking.

The blade change is nothing special, but nothing difficult either. Wrenches are stored on board — not in board in some compartment I have to remember exists and then disassemble for access. Removing the throat plate is a snap with the provided hooked wrench.

The included push stick is great. It even quick-releases from its storage place if you need it during a cut, which is hardly an approved technique. Best practice: If you think you might need it, grab it before starting the cut.

The cord is short enough that you'll probably need an extension cord. But it's just the right length to wrap around the cord holder, which eases moving and storing the tool.

The DeWalt DW745 could be my main table saw. It rips most everything I need, from 600 feet of 2-by in one shot (I did this, don't ask) to fine-tuned trim. It's a small tool big on features.

*Mark Clement is a deck builder in Ambler, Penn., and a member of the DeckExpo live-action demo team.*

## Slim and Trim Nailer Great for Porch Work

**T250A-F16 Angled Finish Nailer**  
**Paslode**  
**800/222-6990**  
**paslode.com**  
**Street price: \$190**  
**Circle #3**

Although a trim gun isn't a front-line tool for deck builders, I'd bet most deck builders have one in the truck. I use one mainly for trim work on porches, where the T250A-F16's range of 1 1/4-inch to 2 1/2-inch 16-gauge nails is perfect.

Feel is a blend of size, weight, and balance — and the T250A-F16 gets it right, though out of the box I didn't think so: There's something about its compact shape that made it feel different from other finish guns. But it wasn't long before I changed my mind.

In tight corners, over-head, or down low, the T250A-F16 performed. It was supremely easy to control, and aiming the nails was a cinch. The tool didn't split wood as I pinned miters together, either.

The textured rubber on the handle gripped well, and the trigger felt just right. The tool zapped nails into hardwood and softwood; and reloading was a simple matter of sliding in a rack of nails, then pulling back and releasing the follower. When changing nail sizes, I had to stick something pointy into the nail slide to tweak the nails free. This sounds like



a pain, but it was little trouble.

When out of nails, the tool locks up so you can't dry fire it. Except for the last 10 or so, you can see what size nails are in the magazine. Because you can't see the last few nails, do be careful when you change to shorter ones. Your hands might end up in line with a nail you expect to be an inch shorter than it is.

I didn't need to do this, but opening the tool to clear jams is simple. Unlike opening a lot of other nailers to clear a jam, when you open this one, the nails do not shoot out if you forget to pull back the follower.

Opening the front as you would for jam clearing is actually a good way to empty the magazine at nail-swap time.

A trim nailer's nose is a big deal to me. The Paslode's small no-mar tip stayed put and worked well. I could see around it and it was gummy enough to hold where it contacted the work.

The depth-of-drive knob is big and easily turned. The handle is even embossed to indicate adjustment direction. The T250A-F16 exhausts through a port that swivels to your preferred position.

The nails come in hard plastic boxes (which are #5 plastic, so I can't recycle them where I live) that keep the nails dry and the strips unbroken.

This combination of little things renders a really small nailer a big-time part of my work. — M.C. ❖

## Double-End Utility Knife

**Flip Knife**  
**C.H. Hanson**  
**800/827-3398**  
**chhanson.com**  
**Street price: \$10**  
**Circle #2**



I've thrown out more utility knives than my lumberyard sells in a week. It's such a simple tool that you wouldn't think so many of them would be so frustrating. C.H. Hanson, though, may have made a keeper.

The company's Flip Knife holds a blade on each end, so you have two regular blades at the ready, or a standard blade and a hook blade. Releasing blades for changing is easy — just push in the red button, and the blade pulls right out.

The only downside I've found to this knife is that you need a screwdriver to open the tool to access the spare-blade storage. — Andy Engel