

Feature-Rich Job-Site Table Saw by Mark Clement

R4510 10-Inch Portable Table Saw
Ridgid
800/474-3443
ridgid.com
Street price: \$500



I look for three things in a job-site table saw: power to hog through treated lumber, accuracy for precise rips in PVC or cedar, and creature comforts that help me use the saw efficiently and safely. Ridgid's R4510 delivers on all of them.

While one of the most common ways I use a table saw is ripping the last piece of 2-by decking, I've also used the R4510's 3½-inch depth of cut to plow through

4-by western red cedar to make 2-by (I ordered too much of the former and too little of the latter). The R4510 had the go-juice for both projects. I could feel it slowing compared with ripping 1-by PVC, but it made the cut.

The fence is big and accurate and locks securely. After a few months in the truck, though, the locking handle has gotten a little sticky; if it were a little bigger, cinching it down would be easier.

The tape measure-style markings on the rails that guide the fence are precise and stay, by and large, clear of dust. The ones I've used in the past have rarely been accurate, so I'm in the habit of measuring with my tape from fence to saw tooth — which I don't need to do on this saw. In fact, the markings are almost too precise — down to 1/32 inch. Having that many lines can be confusing. The micro-adjustment wheel on the fence is a little finicky; however, I don't really need it, as there's nothing a little fist-nudge to the fence can't dial in.

The R4510 comes with a riving knife, which sits behind the blade and prevents sawn wood from pinching the blade. It's an effective safety device, worth the trouble it took to install it initially.

Though the unit can be carried, I almost dread doing so. Fortunately, the R4510's collapsible rolling stand eliminates a lot of carrying. It rolls on 6-inch plastic wheels (nice, they won't go flat). It has good balance and handy grab points, and it sets up and collapses sensibly. One guy can get it on and off the truck. Watch that the miter gauge doesn't slide out when you tip the saw towards you when humping it up to the tailgate (lift from the dust-chute side to prevent this). I like that the stand enables storing the saw on end — ideal for cramped trucks and trailers.

A number of other features set this saw apart. The push-stick location, under the right side of the saw deck, is at the same time out of the way and an easy reach. I love that the fence stores under the table in a dedicated slot for travel or cross-cutting. This is so perfect for contractors in a hurry that it's hard to say how much aggravation it saves. The blade wrench and blade storage are visible on the side of the saw, which I also like. Blade change is easy.

The cord-wrap is great. Its presence alone is excellent, plus Ridgid spaced the hooks so that when you wrap the cord, the plug doesn't terminate on one of the hooks. It's a nice detail among many, on a saw that delivers power and accuracy.

Contributing editor Mark Clement is a deck builder in Ambler, Pa.

Durable, Comfortable, Mud-Releasing Boots

Roofer's Boots
Duluth Trading Company
800/505-8888
duluthtrading.com
Street price: \$175

While lots of carpenters like heavy-duty, thick leather, up-the-shin, steel-toe work boots, I prefer a hiker style. This more-sneaker-than-boot design enables me to move fast, whether that's walking at a decent clip carrying materials or climbing through joists.



The problem with hikers, though, is that they're made for hiking, not daily wear. Even though a decent pair costs a hundred bucks, they last me only about six months before the end draws near.

While flipping through the Duluth Trading Company catalogue, I spotted the odd-looking "Roofer's Boot." It's based on a 1950s design and looks nearly identical to the boots the guys are wearing in the photograph "City Lunch" (you know, the one of iron workers sitting on a girder a zillion feet up eating lunch while building 30 Rockefeller Center in New York City). However, what I saw was a light yet durable-looking leather boot that might just last. At \$175, the price made me circumspect, but I was sick of replacing hikers, so I took a chance.

And I'm glad I did.

The Roofer's Boots are tough. The leather uppers have essentially no wear

parts other than where the leather is doubled-up around the heel and sides of the foot, and that seam is triple stitched and riveted. The lace eyelets are all metal and flush to the upper. I like this because they lace and unlace easily, and for those times I'm working on my knees inside a customer's house, there are no hooks to scratch the flooring. I've also found that the leather doesn't let much water through on wet job sites.

The sole is stoutly stitched to the upper and is solid rubber as opposed to the hiker style's various layers and overmolds that eventually delaminate and let in dirt and water. And when the rubber does wear down, I can bring the boots to a cobbler and have them resoled.

The sole is plenty grippy in the mud-bath that a deck site can be, but the soles' shallow contours don't hold much mud, like more deeply contoured soles do. Sure, my truck's floor mats are still dirty, but these soles release the mud much quicker than those on other boots I've owned.

If I had to complain, I'd wish the insoles were a little more durable. I wore through the pair the boots shipped with pretty quickly. Also, one thing that makes this a "roofer's" boot is that the heel is a little higher than a typical hiker, the idea being that the heel sort of compensates for a roofer working on a pitch all day. I notice it when I put them on. I suppose if your feet or legs are super-sensitive you might find yourself wanting to resole them with a shorter heel.

But other than that, after the miles I've walked in them, these boots seem built to last and ready for work in all seasons. And they're made here in the U.S. — M.C.

Voluminous Tool Bag

Dr. Wood Tool Case
Occidental Mfg.
707/824-2560
bestbelt.com
Street price: \$465

In all my years of carpentry, I've wrestled with where to store and how to transport my hand tools. Some, of course, live in my toolbelt. But the older I get, the lighter I like to keep that particular load. And some, like a handsaw and a flat bar, just don't fit in a toolbelt.

I've tried a couple of things, including a nice wooden toolbox I made, and on the other end of the spectrum, a dry-wall-compound bucket with a BucketBoss liner. The toolbox got me some compliments, but its capacity was limited. The bucket was actually more functional than the toolbox, although orders of magnitude less elegant. And unlike the toolbox, which just gets wet in the rain, the bucket acts like, well, a bucket.

About a year ago, I tried Occidental Leather's new tool bag, the Dr. Wood. I'll acknowledge right now that this thing is expensive. But holy cow, does it do the job! First, it looks

nice, which helps to project a professional image. And it seems durable; I've been dragging it around for a year now, and there's hardly a scuff mark on it.

But most important, it's got a place for everything — even a short handsaw fits. I've found spots for chisels, pliers, snips, wrenches, hand benders, pry bars, tape measures,

notepads, laser levels, calculators, pencils, chalklines, plans, permits, and ibuprofen. It's not close to full. If I ever actually filled my Dr. Wood, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be able to lift it.

It's clear that Occidental put a lot of thought and money into this bag. And it's entirely American made, meaning that it's not just assembled here, but all its components are also made right here. Sure, it's pricey. But every time I look at it, I am happy I own it. I can't even say that about my dog.
 — *Andy Engel* ♦

