

Toolbits | by Tom O'Brien

Tool Bags. Lenox says its new *Soft Storage Tool Bags* can stand up to any kind of job-site abuse. The wide-mouth Contractor's Tool Bag has 14 interior pockets and a compartment for small parts. The Bucket Tool Organizer has 22 interior and 12 exterior compartments and a shoulder strap. The Electrician's Tote and Plumber's Tote also have lots of pockets, plus trade-specific details like elastic loops. Unfortunately, none of the tool bags has a coffee-cup holder. Prices range from \$30 to \$65.

Lenox, 800/628-8810, lenoxtools.com.



Multi-Tool. The *Striker Drywall Talon* is designed to lighten the load for drywall hangers. In addition to a standard utility blade, it has a built-in rasp for smoothing out rough edges, a serrated edge for making saw cuts, and — on the handle — a striking cap for dimpling imperfections and setting exposed nail heads. The blade housing opens and closes like a jackknife and has a thumb rest that the maker says reduces user fatigue. The tool costs about \$13.

Striker, 704/658-9332, strikerhandtools.com.

Drywall Picker-Upper. There's no shortage of devices out there that can be used to lever a sheet of drywall into position using foot pressure, but the most effective one I've found is Marshalltown's *Panel Lifter*. Its distinctive feature is a boot strap that makes it easy to grab a panel and make adjustments completely hands-free. It's also handy for hanging doors. It costs about \$25.

Marshalltown Co.,
800/888-0127,
marshalltown.com.



Fast Finisher. Ames has been making Bazooka taping tools — which can apply tape and compound simultaneously, plus crease and cut the tape — for more than 50 years. The company says its latest model, the *EasyClean Automatic Taper*, is lighter and more ergonomic than previous versions. It also features an easily removable cover plate that's supposed to simplify cleanup and routine maintenance. You can rent the tool for about \$4 per day from one of the company's rental locations or buy an identical model under the TapeTech brand for \$1,200.

Ames Taping Tools, 800/241-2771,
amestools.com.