

Toolbits

Painter's Helpers. Last May, a California painting contractor formed a company to sell two new tools: the *Brush Flex* and the *Mini Roller Flex*. Both consist of a roller or brush on a flexible handle. The handle screws on to the end of a telescoping pole so that the painter can reach awkward or difficult spaces. Now both tools are available in one package: The *Flex Paint Kit* accepts a range of large and small mini-roller and brush sizes and costs \$30.

McCauley Tools, 800/685-4911, mccauleytools.com.

Purpose-Built Blades. Milwaukee has added two application-specific Sawzall Blades to its lineup. The *Ductwork Blade* is for installing takeoffs on sheet-metal ductwork, with a tip designed for plunge cuts and a tapered profile for radius cuts. The *Drywall Blade* is aimed at plumbers and electricians working on remodeling jobs. At 2½ inches, it's long enough to easily cut holes in 5⁄8-inch drywall, but short enough to minimize the chance of hitting pipes or wires. It has teeth on both edges so cuts can be made in either direction. A five-pack of Ductwork Blades costs \$20; a single Drywall Blade goes for \$7.

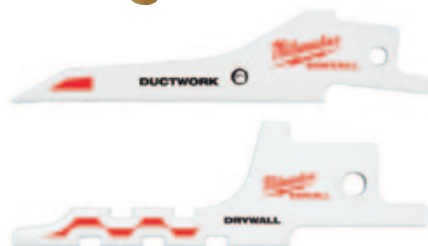
Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp., 800/729-3878, milwaukeeetool.com.

Bench Press. Rockwell has adapted its popular JawHorse for use in the shop. The *BenchJaws* vise uses the same foot-pedal mechanism as the JawHorse, but it comes with an L-shaped steel plate (instead of a folding sawhorse) that screws onto a corner of a workbench. The 6⅞-inch by 1⅞-inch jaws have nonmarring polyurethane face plates and a clamping range of up to 16 inches. An Extension Jaw accessory extends the range to 24 inches, and a Multipurpose Jaw accessory accommodates tapered and round objects. Cost is \$100 (about \$50 less than the JawHorse); accessories are \$40 each.

Rockwell Tools, 866/514-7625, rockwelltools.com.

Get a Grip. You may be familiar with YakTrax — stainless steel coils attached to a rubber harness that slips over the shoe to provide traction on snow and ice. Those are for winter sports, but now the manufacturer has come out with a product engineered for people who work outside. *Diamond Grip* ice and snow cleats use the same concept as YakTrax but consist of dozens of diamond-tipped steel grippers strung on steel aircraft cable. You won't want to walk on finished surfaces wearing these — they'll scratch even marble tile — but if the remainder of this winter finds you lugging 2x4s across an icy job site, you might want to check them out. They cost \$42 per pair.

ICetrekks, 866/925-8729, icetrekks.com.



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