

Rough and Tough Circular Saw by Mark Clement

DWS535
7¹/₄-Inch Wormdrive Circular Saw
DeWalt
800/433-9258
dewalt.com
Web price: \$160

I demand a lot from a circular saw. One day I might need it for 10 hours of get-it-done-yesterday production cutting, and the next day I'll want to use it with a straightedge to deliver smooth, clean cuts in trim work. It has to be rugged, too: When I'm done cutting, I don't typically set down my saw as much as I drop it. DeWalt's new DWS535 wormdrive seems to do everything I need a circular saw for — with a combination of power, finesse, and lots of thought-through details I like.



Rough and Tough

The DWS535 is a real locomotive. I plowed through stacks of PT framing, decking, and engineered header stock without the saw ever slowing down. Its ³/₁₆-inch-thick magnesium shoe is light-weight yet sturdy. If you can bend or damage it, congratulations: You're officially brutal on tools.

The handle is well-designed and is at an ideal operating angle for making cuts in all kinds of positions. The rubber grip doesn't get slick when my hands are sweaty, and the trigger is easy to reach with no pinch points, even when I'm wearing gloves.

The magnesium housing keeps the weight down to 13.8 pounds, making this saw one of the lighter wormdrives on the market. Still, it's heavy enough for lowering the tool through joist cuts in place and other "off-the-lumber-pile" cuts.

The depth of cut at 90 degrees is 2⁷/₁₆ inches and 1⁷/₈ inches at 45 degrees. There are handy bevel detents at 22.5 and 45 degrees on the miter gauge.

Smart Design

The power of a circular saw is crucial, of course, but if it isn't well-designed, it's just a boat anchor I want to toss.

One of the first things I look for when using a saw is how easy it is to see the line I want to cut. The line of sight past the blade housing and the space between the blade and the shoe is critical for accurate cuts — not as much for framing but very important for trim work. The designers of the DWS535 got it right — no neck craning needed, no looking over the front of the saw necessary.

It's often the little things that make me love a tool (and conversely, that can make me hate a tool) and the DWS535

has a lot of little things to love. It's got a long and uber-tough power cord; the arbor lock for blade changes is easy to see and reach; and unlike the blade locks on some saws, the DeWalt's doesn't hurt when I engage it, and I don't have to press it like my life depends on it to stop the blade from turning while I loosen the blade bolt.

Even though there's no on-board spot for a blade wrench, blade changes are easy. What's more, the bevel adjustment (the tool rolls over to 53 degrees, for you rafter-cutters) has a tiny hook on it to help pull out the diamond knock-out from your blades. It's not perfect, but it's there, and it helps this light, tough saw earn a top spot doing down-and-dirty work on my job sites. ❖

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