

### Weigh In!

Want to test a new tool or share a tool-related testimonial, gripe, or technique? Contact us at [jlctools@zondahome.com](mailto:jlctools@zondahome.com).



# TOOLS

OF THE TRADE

## Paslode XP Cordless Framing Nailer

BY TIM UHLER

**Paslode used to make** the only hoseless framing gun available, but over the last decade, quite a few more guns have come onto the market. To compete, Paslode has once again updated its gas-powered nailer (introduced as the XP in 2015), and I've been using the newest version for a few months.

When I reviewed the XP nailer for *Tools of the Trade* in 2015 (see "Field Tested: Paslode's Cordless XP Framing Nailer," [jlconline.com](http://jlconline.com)), I gave it excellent marks because of how well it performed. In our testing then, we shot through three boxes of nails and two gas canisters without a single jam or misfire and had no trouble shooting into LVLs. For blocking and pickup work, the gun was plenty fast, and the aggressive nosepiece made it easy to toenail accurately. The latest version of the XP shares all of these characteristics.

**So what's new?** Before sitting down to write this review, I compared the 2015 model with the 2021 model, and the only significant

difference in operation I found is that I can load the magazine before pulling back the slide. But I'm not irritated at all to be reviewing a gun that is nearly identical to the gun I reviewed six years ago. That just means Paslode got it right then and has now made a great gun a little better.

Since this gun is gas powered, it requires fuel and a spark, but the tiny, 7-volt lithium-ion battery is very light, as are the gas canisters, which are widely available. Paslode claims that a canister of gas will shoot up to 1,200 nails, and that a battery will last 9,000 nails. What I found is that I never ran out of fuel before I used up the nails in a box and canister combo.

**Performance.** It is true some battery-powered nailers are very fast. Paslode claims this gun (sequential trigger only) shoots three nails per second. I don't care what the actual number is; it shoots as fast as I nail, which is good enough for me.



Paslode's cordless CFN325XP framing nailer is light at 7.2 pounds and compact enough to easily fit inside framing bays, making it ideal for installing blocking and other pickup work (left). It has an aggressive nosepiece that prevents the nailer from slipping when toenailing, and tool-free depth-of-drive adjustment (right).

Photos: Tim Uhler

What I have always loved about Paslode is the quality of its fasteners. These are the only gun nails that don't bend when I shoot them into an LSL (don't get me started on how much I loathe LSLs). Even when I've reviewed battery-powered nailers from other manufacturers, I've bought Paslode nails. One caveat: Check to make sure that the offset full-head nails will meet your local codes.

**Weight.** Even when loaded with a strip of nails, the gun weighs in at right around the 7-pound-6-ounce mark—about 4 pounds less than comparable battery-powered nailers on the market. That matters because when I hang the gun from my bags, I'm not lopsided. It means when I frame overhead, I cause less wear and tear on my shoulders, and the list goes on. And the recoil is light, so

there's little shock to my wrist when I use it.

This is important to me; I'm nearly 44 years old and have always worked in the trades, specifically framing, foundations, and siding. Choosing tools with a view to staying healthy cannot be oversold. I love this gun and recommend it.

I've used this gun in its different iterations for the last 20 years as a pickup framing gun, and it just keeps getting better. Consumables aren't cheap, but then again, nothing is anymore. Online, the gun retails for \$390. [paslode.com](http://paslode.com)

*Tim Uhler is a lead carpenter for Pioneer Builders in Port Orchard, Wash. He is a contributing editor to JLC. Follow him on Instagram at @awesomeframers, subscribe to his YouTube channel, or visit his website at [awesomeframers.com](http://awesomeframers.com).*



The Paslode XP nailer has a big rafter hook that rotates so that the nailer can also be hung from a tool belt.

## Multipurpose Prescription Safety Glasses

BY TOM O'BRIEN

**I'm a working carpenter** and a serious bicyclist who's nearsighted as well as astigmatic, so I've come to depend on an assortment of prescription eyewear to correct my vision and protect my eyes: safety glasses for the job, wraparounds for the bike, sunglasses and "attractive" frames for leisure wear. Recently, when my optometrist changed my prescription, I set out in search of a frame that was capable of multitasking. My quest was rewarded when I discovered Wiley X ([wileyx.com](http://wileyx.com)). This company was founded in 1987 to manufacture eye protection for military personnel, but it later branched out to serve blue-collar workers and outdoor sporting enthusiasts.

What sets Wiley X apart from competitors is that every product it makes meets the ANSI Z87.1 safety standards and is classified as personal protective equipment (PPE). As a bonus, even its wraparound frames can accommodate a strong prescription like mine.

I chose the company's P-17 model outfitted with transition lenses so I could dispense with sunglasses. After using them for six months on the jobsite, I can say without hesitation that these are the best prescription safety glasses I have ever worn. The wrap-around lenses afford a super-wide field of view and seem to deflect airborne debris as well as or better than side shields—with none of the dark factor.

On the jobsite, my only complaint is the time it takes for the transition lenses to lighten when I go inside after being out in the



Wiley X P-17 prescription safety glasses (top left) feature an impact-resistant wraparound frame that does not require side shields. Choosing transition lenses (which darken in sunlight) enabled the author to retire the assortment of frames and lenses (bottom left) he used to rely on for work and sports.

sun. If someone were going to wear these glasses only on the job, I would recommend clear lenses. But for my multitasking needs, I can live with this minor annoyance.

Wiley X sells directly to consumers and through dealers. I bought my glasses from SportRx ([sportrx.com](http://sportrx.com)), whose excellent customer service people steered me toward the model I purchased. The frames are available in different colors, and the cost for a prescription pair starts at \$155 on Wiley X's prescription website, [wileyxrx.com](http://wileyxrx.com).

*Tom O'Brien is a freelance writer and a restoration carpenter in New Milford, Conn., and a frequent contributor to JLC.*

Photos: nailer, Tim Uhler; glasses, Tom O'Brien



# Metabo HPT VB3616DA Cordless Rebar Cutter/Bender

BY JOHN CARROLL

**The Metabo** HPT VB3616DA Cordless Rebar Cutter/Bender is a battery-powered version of the manufacturer's corded cutter and bender (the Metabo HPT VB16Y). Although it has cut the cord, the folks at Metabo HPT maintain this battery-powered version performs even better than the VB16Y, attributing this enhanced performance to a new brushless motor as well as the powerful 36-volt MultiVolt battery.

In use, the new bender/cutter delivers on this promise. After I measure, mark, and align rebar up to  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch thick (that is, #5 rebar), the cutter breaks the piece cleanly in a few seconds. The manufacturer claims that the tool will deliver up to 270 cuts in #5 grade 60 rebar on a single charge (I did not test this).

The bending feature is even more impressive. Here, Metabo promises a whopping 520 bends in #5 rebar per charge. Like the cutting operation, the bending function takes just a few seconds per bend.

The precision of these bends, however, is the main selling point of this tool. It has a dial that you can set to any angle from 0 to 180 degrees. But it doesn't stop there. You can fine-tune the bends a degree or two at a time with the dial until you get the exact angle you need. There are other, less-expensive electric bending tools available, but none of them offer this kind of precision.

The crisp 90-degree angles I got really sped up the process on a footing I did recently. In the past, I'd bend the steel, place it in the trench, and invariably have to take it out and rebend it to make it fit the footing. I'd often go through this time-consuming and annoying routine a few times before I'd get it right. With this bender, the steel followed the corners correctly on the first go-around.

The Metabo HPT VB3616DA is the only battery-powered cutter/bender on the market. The list price for the cutter/bender, two 36-volt 4.0-Ah batteries, a charger, and a case is \$2,400. This is \$400 more than the corded version, so if you anticipate having power readily available on all your jobs, you can save money by going with the original, corded model. If you're willing to fork over the additional \$400, though, you'll avoid the hassle of running a cord and still have plenty of power for any residential job. [metabo-hpt.com](http://metabo-hpt.com)

*John Carroll, author of Working Alone, is a builder who lives and works in Durham, N.C.*



Powered by either a 36-volt MultiVolt battery or an AC adapter (sold separately), the Metabo HPT rebar cutter/bender cuts and makes precise bends in up to #5 rebar.