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TOOLS

OF THE TRADE

DeWalt 5-in-1 Drill/Driver Kit

BY NATHAN RINNE

As a carpenter and cabinetmaker, I sometimes find myself in predicaments where a regular drill just will not work. Whether it's an odd angle that doesn't allow me to get square with the screw head or a tight spot where I need to drill a hole but just can't quite squeeze the drill in, there have been plenty of situations where I wished I had a solution. Enter the DeWalt Xtreme 12-volt Max 5-in-1 drill/driver kit. With two speeds, 15 clutch settings, and four different interchangeable heads, it has a solution for every problem.

The first thing I noticed about this drill was its compact size and ergonomic grip design. It felt good in my hands, and I didn't have any problem keeping it in plane with the fastener heads, which was a concern of mine since I am so used to impact drivers. It comes with a compact 12-volt, 2.0-Ah battery, which adds little to the 5-inch length of the tool and weighs next to nothing. Add to that the fact that three of the four heads have quick-release $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch chucks, and it would seem DeWalt covered all the bases with this one. For fit and user comfort, I give this drill a 10.

Of all the attachments, the standard quick-release head saw the most use while I had it in my shop, for obvious reasons. However, having the ability to quickly switch to a right angle or offset drill is a major plus. And if the ability to switch between heads isn't

enough, DeWalt even added a feature that allows you to position the attachment at any angle from 0 to 360 degrees—you aren't limited to 90, 180, or 270 degrees. The drill has positive stops all the way around the head that make for a quick turn to get into literally any space you could possibly need to access. I don't often need those attachments, but when I do, I need them badly. These heads are designed well and have saved me a good bit of fussing on more than one occasion.

My only complaint about this kit is that it is not an impact driver, so I tend to use it more to drill holes unless the occasion arises that I need to get into a tight spot to run a screw. But that isn't a deal breaker, and I would definitely recommend this versatile tool.

The DeWalt DCD703 kit includes the drill, a 12-volt Max DCB122 2.0-Ah battery, a charger, a kit bag, a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch chuck attachment, a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hex right-angle attachment, a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hex quick-release attachment, and a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hex quick-release offset attachment. The kit retails for \$190. dewalt.com

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DeWalt's DCD703 5-in-1 12-volt drill kit includes a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch ratcheting chuck (1), a right-angle attachment (2), an offset attachment (3), and a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hex quick-release attachment, along with a charger, 2.0-Ah battery, and bag (4).

Mini Form Buster Pry Bar

BY TIM UHLER

A good pry bar is a must-have tool for any framer. We use one for anything from demo to stripping forms to moving walls and big panels, and we've long been fans of the Burke Bar, Jr., a 47-inch bar with a curved, 3-inch-wide blade. Unfortunately, a couple of years ago, someone stole the Burke bars we had owned since the late '90s from one of our jobsites (I think it was some kids, because they left other things behind that were a lot more valuable), and I had to replace them.

Even though I loved the Burke bar, I'm open to trying new tools and noticed that Dude Tools was offering a similar pry bar in a couple of different sizes with some interesting features. I own several of the company's Dude Buster deep sockets and have been impressed with their American-made quality, so I decided to buy two of Dude's Mini Form Busters for my crew when I discovered them online.

There is a full-size Form Buster with a

48-inch-long handle and a 12-inch-long by 3-inch-wide curved blade. The Mini Form Buster that I ended up ordering is a little smaller than the Burke bar, with a handle measuring 36 inches long and a 12-by-2-inch blade, but I consider it an upgrade because it has a couple of additional features that work well. One is the "knuckle-saver bumper" under the handle, a welcome addition. I can't tell you how many times I've smashed my knuckles while stripping foundation forms; with the Form Buster, the bumper leaves a small space between the handle and the surface that momentum or a heavy form is trying to drive your hand into.

The other useful feature is the round metal knuckle right under the curve of the bar, which provides more leverage for prying. There's a hole through the knuckle to accommodate the axle for an optional wheel kit that can be added to the bar, but we didn't order that.

Besides working well to strip forms, the

Mini Form Buster is great for prying walls up enough to get blocks under them for either rigging or wall jacks. It's also great for squaring up a big wall; we just screw a block to the subfloor sheathing and use the Mini to rack the wall as needed until the diagonals are equal.

We frame, sheathe, and—often—install windows, siding, and trim on the flat before lifting walls into place. Those framed walls are heavy, but the curved blade on the Form Buster slips easily underneath them; from there, it's a matter of leverage and our Mini Form Busters help us maximize that leverage, making our lives easier. Once we've lifted a wall into place, we can put the curved end between a block and a 2-by brace to use the bar as a handle to move the wall to plumb. \$250. dudetools.com

Tim Uhler is a lead carpenter for Pioneer Builders in Port Orchard, Wash., and a contributing editor to JLC.



The Mini Form Buster has a curved blade for leverage (1) and a rubber bumper under the handle to save your knuckles (2). The metal knuckle under the bar is designed to accommodate an optional wheel kit (3) but also improves leverage (4).

Photos: Tim Uhler

Tough Thermal-Imaging Smartphone

Anyone working on a building envelope knows the value of a thermal-imaging camera as a diagnostic tool. Thankfully, the price for a good one has dropped over the years from thousands to hundreds of dollars, making infrared cameras a lot more accessible. But as far as I know, up until the introduction of the AGM Glory G1S in late spring of 2022, the only IR smartphone option was the FLIR One, an oversized dongle that plugs into the USB-C port on an Android phone or the Lightning port on an iPhone. On the AGM smartphone, the thermal-imaging capability is built in, and even though it's controlled by an app on the phone, it functions just like a regular camera phone to take high-resolution 256x192 pixel stills (in comparison, the resolution of the FLIR One Pro is 160x120 pixels) and 25 FPS video in several different black-and-white and color palettes. Not only that, the phone's built-in camera has an outstanding IR night-vision capability.

All of this is packaged in a rugged Android phone with an IP68 rating (that means that it's resistant to dirt and dust and a 30-minute dunking in water up to about 5 feet deep). The company says it meets U.S. military specification MIL-STD-810H, where equipment is subjected to 29 tests for shock, vibration, freezing and thawing, and more. My test was to (accidentally) drop the phone on a concrete slab a couple of times, which it passed with flying colors.

The company says that the phone is 5G compatible on the T-Mobile network; I haven't attempted to connect the phone to the network yet, because I'm a slow adopter and coverage is sparse in my area, so I can't comment on how well the AGM works as a conventional phone. But for users of other Android phones, the interface will look familiar, and the form



The AGM's IR camera can show the temperature of the water in a teapot, as well as that of the burner next to it (left). Equally impressive is an IR night-vision photo of a furnace in a basement—taken in total darkness (right).

factor is nearly identical to my OnePlus 8 phone with a Spigen case, though the AGM's housing adds a bit more bulk to the phone. \$700. agmmobile.com —*Andrew Wormer*