EZ-Wings Miter Saw Station

BY GARY STRIEGLER

Ask carpenters to name their three most frequently used power tools, and I believe a miter saw would be on most of their lists. While most of us have learned to invest in a quality saw with a good blade, I am constantly amazed at how frequently I see great saws on very average saw stands. To me, that's akin to driving a high-performance car with bald tires.

Earlier in my career, I was lucky enough to find a Saw Helper Ultrafence at a trade show. That saw stand was portable, sturdy, and easy to set up, with wide support and an accurate stop system for efficient, repeatable cuts. The best part about it was that once it was attached to the saw, it could be broken down and set up again in a short time with completely repeatable performance. I think I bought six of the company's saw stands over the years but, unfortunately, it went out of business more than a decade ago.

I've purchased several more saw stands over the years, but none have measured up to the standard set by the Saw Helper. So when I discovered the EZ-Wings Pro miter-saw station last year at another trade show and saw that its American-made design was remarkably close to my old favorite, I was eager to see how it measured up.

Setup. Referring to the easy-to-follow set-up video on the EZ-Wings website, I spent about an hour screwing and bolting the miter-saw station together (the necessary fasteners for each step are clearly marked and packaged together). EZ-Wings uses an adjustable base system that attaches through the holes that are already in your particular saw. According to the manufacturer, Red House Tools, the system can be set up to work with just about any existing saw stand.

Since just about everyone I know has several of the "tube" type stands, I decided to set up the miter station to work with a DeWalt saw and one of my DeWalt tube stands. If you want to set it up on a fixed bench in a shop, the system has built-in support legs. I found that starting the install process with the saw on a bench using the legs, then moving it to my saw stand after the wings were attached worked well.

All it takes to break the miter-saw station down is backing off one screw on each side to remove the wings. Because the wings attach to a bracket that remains fastened to the saw, their position is identical each time they are remounted, and the system stays aligned. For transport, all the components can be neatly packed in the equipment bag that comes with the system.

The EZ-Wings Pro miter saw station is compatible with most saw stands **(1)**. The system's support wings attach to a two-piece base, which adjusts to fit your saw **(2)**.

Photos by Gary Striegler

Performance. After sliding the stop in, I made some test cuts and was happy to see that the stop had no play in it at all. If I am trying to make a cut within 1/32 inch, the stop can't move. Right now, Red House does not offer a built-in tape measure that works with the stop, but I am told that the company is working on several more measuring/stop options, including a laser measuring device.

At the recent IBS show, I saw the new legs that will be available soon. They are lightweight carbon fiber and completely adjustable, and quickly clip onto the EZ-Wings fence for maximum support.

The EZ-Wings system is well designed and easy to set up. I like that it can be used on a bench in a shop setting or can fit on any stand that I have seen. I'm eager to see options the company will offer for stops and measuring; I think it is by far the best system I have seen since my old favorite disappeared. Prices start at about $850. redhousetools.com

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The mounting bracket that attaches the wings to the stand has front-to-back adjustment and another screw to micro-adjust the height to match your saw, plus a couple of bolts with comfortable grips for tightening the bracket after you make final adjustments **(3)**.

Multiple wings can be added to each side for additional support, while L-brackets are used to make the fence-to-wing attachments. The author recommends setting the EZ-Wings fences up about 1/4 inch behind the saw's fence to accommodate material that isn't perfectly straight **(4)**.

Here the author is attaching the miter station to a DeWalt saw stand, using four 1/4-20 x 2 1/2-inch bolts (that is, 1/4-inch-diameter-by-2 1/2-inch-long bolts with 20 threads per inch)—the only bolts not supplied in the EZ-Wings hardware packet—to fasten the assembly to the base. A 6-foot level placed across the top of the saw table and wings while he's adjusting the saw stand brackets helps the author to align the assembly **(5)**.

Toolbox? Step Stool? It's Both

BY JOHN CARROLL

I recently came to the conclusion that my life would be simpler if I put all my cordless drills and drivers, along with their batteries and chargers, in a single toolbox. To do this, I would need a fairly large one, so I went online to see what was available. I was looking for a simple, open tote without partitions or lids, so I typed in the words "tote toolbox."

It turns out that the word "tote" can mean many things. I was inundated with all kinds of tool bags and toolboxes with zippers, lids, compartments, and pockets—exactly the things I didn't want. In the flood of options, however, DeWalt's DWST25090—an unusual combination of a step stool and toolbox—floated by. It caught my eye because the large, open toolbox was just what I was looking for.

The price ($67 at The Home Depot) for DeWalt's storage step stool was about the same as that of many of the toolboxes that turned up in my search. So, I bought the combination mainly for the toolbox and looked at the step stool as a bonus. This combo has worked out very well for me.

At about 25 inches long, 8 inches deep, and 12 inches wide, the toolbox is quite large. Made of dense plastic, it's also pretty stout, rated to handle 66 pounds. The handle folds down and nestles just inside the box; the way it does that is an advantage, which I'll talk about below.

The step stool is about 17 inches high with a 10-by-23-inch top. Rated to support 300 pounds, it's stout and stable along with being handy, especially for interior work. If I step up on it, my eyes are just above the top of a standard 6-foot 8-inch door, and I can easily reach an 8-foot ceiling. In addition to standing on the step stool, I often use it as a small work platform.

The toolbox can be quickly and securely attached to the top of the step stool via two integral clamps mounted to the ends of the stool. With the toolbox thus mounted, I can carry both the fully loaded toolbox and the stool with one hand. Then, if I need to use the stool, I can unclamp the toolbox in a matter of seconds. Alternatively, the legs can be folded up and the step stool clamped to the top of the toolbox to become a lid.

In some circumstances, I leave the toolbox clamped to the stool. Doing this holds the toolbox up, and I can grab the tool I need at a convenient height. Alternatively—here's where being able to fold the handle down inside the box and out of the way pays off—I can put a piece of plywood over the top of the toolbox and have a nice 1-by-2-foot shelf at a convenient 25-inch height. Going even further, I've considered getting a second DeWalt storage step stool. That way, I could set up the pair about 4 feet apart and lay a piece of plywood across them to make a 2-by-4-foot worktable 25 inches high.

Widely available in big box stores and online, DeWalt's DWST25090 step-stool toolbox might seem odd, but it's proven to be an adaptable and useful combination for me. dewalt.com

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DeWalt's DWST25090 storage step stool consists of a large tool tote and separate step stool that can be clamped together for transport **(1)**. The author uses the stool as a small work platform **(2)**, while the tote stores his cordless tools **(3)**. The stool has a 300-pound load capacity **(4)**.

Photos by Matthew Narvey