

# Pointers on how to select tools for home improvement projects

This fall, more and more men and women will be tackling a wide range of home improvement projects, from simple repairs to major renovations. Many will waste considerable time and energy by not using proper tools.

As the do-it yourself wave continues to grow and more tools appear on the market, the search for the "right" tools can become even more difficult. For this reason, the experts at Stanley Tools have developed the following suggestions and tips that can be used when searching for such commonly used tools as extendable tape rules, levels, crosscut saws and hammers.

"Measure twice, but cut once" is a favorite phrase of many seasoned carpenters who know the importance of having a quality extendable tape rule in their tool collections. No serious do-it-yourselfer should be without one, either.

Quality extendable tape rules should include a thumb-controlled blade-locking device that locks the tape firmly in place, a "true-zero" tape hook, highly visible "life guard" yellow tape, a slowly retracting tape, a durable belt clip, and a

chrome-plated case for rust-protection in outdoor applications. Practical extendable tape rules, such as Stanley's popular Powerlock II® tape rule, are compact, lightweight and can be used to measure lengths from 1/4 of an inch up to 30 feet.

Tape rules are available with measuring capabilities over 30 feet for use in measuring property lines, gutters and sports fields. The experts say quality "long tapes" should be easy to hold, utilize a rust-proofed steel tape, and should have a handy fold-out handle for effortless tape winding.

A variety of projects also call for the use of a dependable all-purpose level. Levels can help guide the installation of many materials from posts and poles, bricks and blocks to shelves, doors, decks and even wallpaper.

When selecting a level, choose one made from non-warping lightweight metal. A practical level also should utilize 360° liquid-filled vials that are readable from any angle and can be replaced easily if one should ever break. Most professional levels utilize three vials (filled with an alcohol mixture) so the

two outside vials can be set in either the horizontal or vertical direction, depending on the project's requirements.

Because the majority of wood cutting projects involve cutting against the wood's grain, the experts suggest purchasing a quality crosscut saw. To make all cutting jobs easier, select a crosscut saw with an aggressive tooth design to make the saw cut faster and more efficiently.

To handle a majority of applications efficiently, the saw should utilize an optimum number of eight-teeth (points) per inch. Crosscut saws with more than eight teeth per inch deliver a fine and slow cut, and those with less than eight tend to give a rough and fast cut.

When choosing an all-purpose hammer, one of the most important things to consider is the weight of the hammer

head. A hammer head that is too light makes the work harder than it has to be, and one that is too heavy will be difficult to control. An all-purpose hammer, say the experts, should have a hammer head that weighs around 16 ounces.

A dependable hammer head should be made from high-carbon steel and have a

heat-treated face for strength and durability. The face also should be convex, to increase nail driving efficiency.

Hammers with "curved" claws make better all-purpose hammers than those with "rip" claws. Curved claws with sharp double-beveled edges make the nail-pulling process easy.



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