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Selected Power & Hand Tools for Handymen

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Every well-equipped household needs a compact set of power & hand tools for basic repairs and maintenance. Whether you are a competent handyman, keen amateur or unwilling fixer-upper, something around your house, boat or camper van will break-down at an inconvenient time and need mending in a hurry. That is when a well planned kit can be a godsend and a lifesaver, literally.

Some people have incredibly comprehensive workshops that include several hand tools for woodworking and metalworking. They also have vices, chisels, wedges, tool room lathes, turret lathes, universal milling machines, kick presses, metal shapers, soldering irons, welding tools, pantograph mills, variable speed drill press, heat treat ovens, belt grinders, belt sanders, jig saws, table saws, jointers, portable planers, wood bandsaws, metal bandsaws, multiple workbenches of varying sizes, sharpening stones and a variety of machinist measuring tools such as calipers, michs and radius gauges. Not everyone has the space to store such an extensive inventory of tools.

In some cases, power tools are clearly a superior option. Using a band saw to cut a circle in the middle of a sheet of wood is more accurate and physically easier than using a bow saw or frame saw. However, many jobs can be performed equally well with either a manual or electrical tool.

Each individual has different recommendations about what should be included in a basic of tool kit. Most would, however, agreed that a hammer, pliers, wire cutters, screwdrivers, allen keys, wrenches, wire stripper, wood and metal saws, utility knife, and a mallet should all hand tools that form a basic kit.

A set of screwdrivers is absolutely essential. Both standard and Phillips heads are necessary. Modern combo units have one handle unit into which multiple head bits may be fitted and removed as required. These sets work well and are great space savers. Some individuals would also include a soldering iron, as well as torx and star drivers in their basic toolkits.

A multi-master is perhaps the most versatile of all power tools. It is a cutter, sander and scraper all combined into one. They have a quick lock-and-load capability. Their oscillation cycle is extremely rapid, ranging from 11,000 to 21,000 revolutions per minute.

The fast oscillation of multi-master units makes them efficient cutting, sanding, or scraping tool. For example, they are capable of cutting small rectangular slots in a boat bulkhead, sanding woodwork in tight corners and similar space-constrained tasks with ease.

Rotary cutters are less critical than power drill but nevertheless useful. They can cut through metal in minutes. Slicing through metal fasteners to open up locked cabinets and lockers is a common application. Some units are less than ten inches long making them very manoeuvrable in small spaces. They operate at 5,000 to 32,000 rpm.

In summary, an important point to remember when planning your collection of power & hand tools is that power units mostly require AC electricity. This is not a problem for house dwellers, but it can be an issue for those that travel about in recreational vans and yachts since they mostly have DC power units and AC power is not always available.

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