



2 - THE

TOOL

LIST

A list of essential woodworking tools is like a checklist for the things you must do to enter heaven. On the one hand, it's nice to have a road map to guide you. On the other hand, there's no way to know if your road map is the right one until you reach your destination.

The following list is designed for people who want to build high-quality furniture. It is not a list for people who make musical instruments or (at the other end of the spectrum) plywood silhouettes of little boys urinating.

This list is culled from written sources from 1678 to the present that I own. Yet, it is not a pure historical survey. This list describes the working set of tools in my tool chest in my shop at home. I do own more tools than this, but those are for other aspects of the craft. I have a 15-gauge finish nailer for installing trim in the house. I have a scorp and travisher for building stick chairs. And so on.

Use this list as a starting place to show you which tools are important and which tools are for tool collections. You should buy a plow plane and a rabbet plane before you even think about buying a Stanley No. 113 circular plane or a framing slick.

And it is these tools that you should pick with particular care. Buying low-quality chisels and hardware-store saws isn't frugality. It's stupidity.

HANDPLANES

Jack plane

Plow plane or combination plane, such as the Stanley No. 45

Rabbet/shoulder plane

Block plane, low-angle version is preferred

Router plane, closed throat

Smooth plane, as small as possible

MARKING & MEASURING

Cutting gauge(s)

Panel gauge*

6" Combination square, which has a removable 6" rule

12' tape measure and/or 3' folding rule

Marking knife

Wooden winding sticks*

36" wooden straightedge*

Wooden try square, 12" blade*

Sliding bevel

Dividers, two to four pair

ESSENTIAL CUTTING TOOLS

Bevel-edge chisels: 1/8", 1/4", 3/8", 1/2" and 3/4"

1-1/2" - to 2" -wide paring chisel

Mortise chisel: 1/4" or 5/16"

Spokeshaves, flat and round-bottomed

Cabinet, modeling and rattail rasps

Card scraper, curved by user

STRIKING & FASTENING TOOLS

Chisel mallet*

13 oz. to 16 oz. hammer

Nailsets*

Nail pincers

Set of slotted screwdrivers

Screw tips for drill/drivers

Sawnut drivers (if you have split sawnuts)

Countersinks; counterbores

10" brace

Hand drill

Set of 13 auger bits

Brad points: 1/8", 3/16", 1/4", 5/16", 3/8", 7/16" and 1/2"

Birdcage awl

Dowel plate*

SAWS

Dovetail saw

Carcase saw

Tenon saw

Panel saws (rip saw, crosscut saw)

Flush cut saw

Coping saw or bowsaw

SHARPENING

Sharpening stones (honing and polishing)

Side-clamp honing guide

Strop* (if you use oilstones)

Grinder
Oilcan or plant mister
Burnisher

APPLIANCES

Bench hook*
Sawbenches*
End-grain shooting board*
Cork sanding block*
Workbench*
Cabinet clamps (at least four)

GOOD-TO-HAVE TOOLS

Dial caliper
12" combination square
Dovetail marker*
Jointer plane
Large shoulder plane
Carpenter's hatchet
Drawknife
Beading plane, such as a 3/16"
Small complex moulder, such as an ogee or square ovolo
A couple pairs of hollows and rounds, such as Nos. 6 or Nos. 8
Mill file
Trammel points*
Miter shooting board*
Miter box

** Tools that can easily be made or should be made by the woodworker.*

I wish I'd had this list when I started woodworking. I also wish my dad had had this list when he started building furniture and, later, houses. His tools, which I have tried to upgrade for him, are on the low end of the quality spectrum. His handsaw gives me blisters just to look at it. His plastic-handled brace is slippery and itchy in use. But those are the first hand tools I used. So their story is worth repeating.