

6 Great Miter-Saw Stands

The best models help you to handle a multitude of carpentry tasks by setting up quickly, moving easily, and providing solid support



Portability



Setup



Storage



Stability



BY RICK ARNOLD AND MIKE GUERTIN

In the early 1980s, there was no such thing as a miter-saw stand. A couple of 2x12s laid across a pair of sawhorses was the workstation for our first chop saw. Today, the choice of manufactured stands is as varied as the jobs you might use them on. We recently tried out 15 stands ranging in price from \$70 to almost \$500. Many of them are made by the same manufacturers that make miter saws. We dismissed two stands because they were of no value. We rated seven saw stands as OK to good, and you'll find our reviews of those stands at FineHomebuilding.com. The six stands we discuss here are the ones that really impressed us.

It's clear that the engineers have done their homework. These saw stands display ingenious approaches to how miter saws are mounted, how the stands collapse for transport, and how extension wings support the work. We didn't identify a best value or best overall because for this tool category; that choice depends on the type of work you do.

There's no perfect miter-saw stand

Miter saws are used for all kinds of cutting, from framing stock and decking lumber to beveled siding, exterior trim, and finish-grade hard-



**ELEGANTLY SIMPLE, SMART,
AND ULTIMATELY, THE MOST VERSATILE**

We fought over this one first

We weren't expecting much from the Trojan when we opened the box, but this stand turned out to be a gem. The system is deceptively simple: A pair of clamp-on sawhorse legs locks onto a 2x "rail" that you supply. The saw bolts to a wood table with a U-channel beneath that straddles and clamps to the rail. Two outfeed rollers with U-clamps mount anywhere along the rail and easily adjust up and down. We tried the system with a 12-ft.-long 2x6 and a 16-ft.-long 2x8. It took three minutes to set up each time. The saw simply sits on the saw table, and if needed, quick-release clamps can hold the saw in place.

The table is a nice place to rest hand tools or short workpieces; nails can be tacked to the sides of the 2x to hold small tools, extension cords, or anything else you would like to store off the ground. Replacing the supplied saw table with a larger site-cut top gives you plenty of room for other tools. You can set the saw toward one end of the 2x rail, then set the two work supports on the same side, creating a nice, long work platform. The Trojan isn't inexpensive. But we're buying two Trojans and assembling a super workstation.

Trojan TWC-35

**WWW.TROJANTOOLS.COM
\$200**

Pros

- Lightweight
- Versatile
- Longest supports
- Stable on rough terrain
- Almost indestructible
- Easily stores on a shelf

Cons

- User must supply 2x rail
- Stores and moves in several parts
- Could have improved screw clamps for roller and saw-table mounts



U-channel secures the saw table. Bolted to the underside of the saw table, the U-channel clamps onto the 2x rail.



Work supports mount on the rail. The support roller's height is adjusted by loosening a screw clamp. The saw table and work supports can be located anywhere along the 2x rail.

A GOOD COMBINATION OF PORTABILITY AND STABILITY

New design, great price

The Ridgid stand is newly redesigned to compete with the Bosch and Delta stands. The biggest improvement is the quick-release saw mount, which improves versatility and also helps when loading saw

Ridgid AC 9941

WWW.RIDGID.COM
\$169

and stand into your truck. Work supports also have been improved. Rollers that support the stock slide along the extension arms instead of being fixed to the ends. The extension arms reach out to almost 10 ft. overall.

To keep the extensions from flexing under a heavy load, support legs are tucked inside the extension arms. While the legs were a good idea, pressing the buttons to work the system is a little tricky, and we found the legs too delicate to stand up to typical job-site abuse. The large-diameter wheels make it easy to pull the saw over rough terrain and up stairs. But they are narrow and sink into soft earth and lawns. Opening and closing the system is a multistep process requiring the operator to walk to



Good idea, bad execution.
Legs stow conveniently inside extension arms, but aren't durable.

Pros

- Quick-release saw mounts
- Collapsible base
- Support rollers extend almost 10 ft.
- Stable on rough terrain
- Big wheels easily tackle stairs

Cons

- Awkward setup
- Flimsy extension legs



each end of the stand in sequence, extending the hinged legs at one end, then lifting the table and rolling out the wheels at the other.

Overall, the stand works well and, with the quick-release saw mounts, is a great stand for a low price.

woods. What's more, a saw stand can spend most of its time in any number of places: on a flat subfloor, on a muddy drive, or anywhere in between.

Given the variety of conditions a stand might need to adapt to, no one stand does it all. However, one stand might fit your needs better than another. For example, if you need a stand that is compact and easily transported, you'll want one that's relatively light and that allows the saw to mount without hassle. Both the Ryobi and Trojan stands excelled in these uses. Without the saws, they occupy little real estate, and they seem tough enough to take the abuse of being thrown in the back of a truck. Additionally, the Trojan saw stand impressed us with its versatility; it can easily change from a small finish-work setup in cramped quarters to a long, well-supported framing setup outside.

If you put up a lot of interior trim, you'll want a stand that can fully support long, flexible moldings. Mobility and speedy set-

up won't be as important as ease of use and accuracy. If this is the case, dependable stops for repeat cutting and a reliable, built-in tape measure would be big pluses. The Sawhelper is designed with the finish carpenter in mind. You'll sacrifice some mobility and quick setup time, but you'll get more accuracy and production for the duration of the job.

For some types of work, such as siding or exterior trim, you might prefer to keep the saw fixed to the stand so that you can move the assembly around the job site in a single trip. In this case, a stand with large wheels is preferable. It should convert from a fully extended stand down to a mobile unit without hassle. The ability to support heavy stock and stability on rough terrain is important. The Delta stood out as a well-designed stand with these considerations in mind. It took more effort getting the stand into and out of the vehicle, but the Delta saw stand moved around most any job site with ease.

Then, of course, there are the hybrid-style saw stands that try to give you the best of all worlds, with their large wheels, long extension for the support, easy setup, and a quick mount for the saw. The Ridgid and Bosch stands met these challenges with balanced sets of features that worked very well together.

Good extension supports make a big difference

The Delta and Ridgid stands have 14-in.- and 12-in.-wide outboard roller supports, handy for siding and exterior-trim work. All six stands we included here have stops for repeat cutting, save for the Trojan. None of the stops, except those on the Sawhelper, are accurate enough for siding or finish work. The Sawhelper had the most sophisticated wing-and-stop assembly with rigid extruded-aluminum wings more than 8 ft. long and adjustable stops that could be flipped out of the way when not in use. All the stands

FROM FLAT TO FULL HEIGHT IN ONE MOTION

Easy setup with solid work supports

The Delta stand sets up fast. Push a lever, then lift the handle until the table tops out at full height. There's a foot bar you can use to stabilize the unit during lift and collapse, and a gas-charged piston does the heavy lifting. Unlike the Ridgid, there's no need for contortions or walking from end to end of the stand during the opening process.

The work supports are nice, wide rollers that also have stops and adjustable fences. Once in place, the supports work well. Our only complaint is that they are a little awkward to adjust.

The stand also stores upright with a saw mounted, so it takes up less storage space. This is an advantage because once bolted to the table, the miter saw is more or less dedicated to the system; otherwise, it can be time-consuming to remove and replace.

If you just want to place a saw on the benchtop without securing it (as we often did), a wood worktable must first be bolted to the metal saw mounts. Portability is no problem, but larger wheels would have made it easier to get the saw and stand up and down stairs.

Delta 36-136

WWW.DELTAMACHINERY.COM; \$200

Pros

- Fastest setup
- Easy to move around
- Stores upright in tight spaces

Cons

- Difficult on stairs
- Can be hard to load and unload
- Short (7 ft.) work support



Adjustable fence stops. Located on slides next to the rollers, the fence stops can be adjusted to be in line with the saw's fence.



One-handed setup. As the stand is raised, wheels come underneath the cross-braced legs. A gas-charged piston helps overcome the weight.



QUICK SETUP, COMPACT STORAGE, AMAZING PRICE

The biggest surprise

We never would have guessed that the Ryobi stand would be one of our favorites, and it was nice to have our expectations shattered so thoroughly. While not the lightest of the rail-style stands, it is one of the most compact.

It's also the most stable, with large push buttons that snap its stiff legs firmly into place. The crossbars that mount the saw to the stand are easy to operate with quick-release locks that engage or disengage in one easy movement.

Like all the quick-release saw mounts, the crossbars have feet, so the saw can be used on top of any flat surface if the full stand is not needed. The work-support uprights are wide chrome-coated tubes with stops that slide up for repeat cuts or slide down to be out of the way. Even though the support arms flexed a bit when fully extended, this is one of the more stable systems.

For a simple stand that sets up quickly and stores in a compact space, the Ryobi doesn't need much improvement.



Ryobi A18MS01

WWW.RYOBITOOLS.COM

\$100

Pros

- Compact
- Stable
- Quick setup
- Portable
- Quick-release saw mounts
- Lowest price

Cons

- No support legs for extension wings



Handles lock out of the way. Ryobi's quick-release saw mounts have large, easy-to-grab handles. When the cam locks engage, the handles are out of the way.

Bosch T4B

WWW.BOSCHTOOLS.COM

\$269



MOBILE ON THE JOB, STABLE IN STORAGE

This stand sets up almost by itself

The new Bosch stand edged out the Delta as the easiest stand to set up. It's impressive how little effort it takes. You turn a lever, and as you gently lower the handle, the wheels roll toward you. The saw rises up to work height in one fluid motion.

The dual-tube extension supports are on the short side with 8-ft. 6-in. overall spread. While the action of extending them is smooth, the work supports aren't as big or as stable as the Delta's and don't always support the workpiece fully.

The medium-diameter pneumatic wheels make it easy to pull the saw over rough terrain and up stairs. The folded length of the

stand is less than the Ridgid, so you have to bend over when pulling it up or rolling it down stairs. But the Bosch stand's overall compact length was good for transport, and it is extremely stable when stored upright. You don't have to worry about a top-heavy saw flipping this stand over.

Pros

- Fast and easy setup
- Quick-release saw mounts
- Compact, stable storage
- Stable on rough grade
- Easy on stairs

Cons

- Heavy
- Short, narrow work support



Easy on your back. During setup, the saw isn't lowered, then raised. Instead, it almost rotates in place until the stand locks upright.

included in this review had well-functioning extension supports.

Quick-release saw mounts improve versatility

Several stands have quick-release saw mounts. The saw is bolted to special crossbars that lock to the top of the stand. The saw can be disengaged easily for transport and storage, or it can be used independently.

The crossbars have feet, so the saw can be used on a flat surface without being unbolted from the crossbars. The mounting system makes it easy and fast to pop saws on and off the rail stands. Most stands with quick-release mounts have sawhorse-style legs without wheels. These stands were easy to load and unload, tended to be more versatile, but were harder to move around the job. We were pleasantly surprised by the Ryobi as a rail-type stand. It was light, compact, and rugged.

The other mounting method requires the saw to bolt to flat metal or wood tables we call benchtops. Once bolted to the benchtop, the miter saw almost becomes dedicated to the system. All benchtop stands have wheels to make them more portable. The Delta excelled as a benchtop model, clearly accomplishing what it was designed to do.

The next generation of stands

We had to have two stands air-shipped to us ahead of their release dates because they are so new. The Ridgid (now in stores) and the Bosch (due at summer's end) combine quick-release saw mounts with a collapsible base. These stands are mobile around the job site and stable on uneven terrain, and the saws can be used easily with or without the stand. This combination of features could represent the next generation of miter-saw stands. □

Rick Arnold and Mike Guertin are contributing editors. Product photos by Krysta S. Doerfler. Job-site photos by John Ross, except where noted.

FineHomebuilding.com

All the stands we checked out earned their place on the job site, but not in the magazine. To get a look at the rest of the stands we tested, visit www.finehomebuilding.com. You can also watch a video of Mike Guertin explaining the benefits of the four different classes of folding miter-saw stands.

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT AND A BUILT-IN TAPE MEASURE

The first choice for finish work

One of the oldest stands on the market, the Sawhelper Ultrafence 85 has features that put it in a class by itself. Available in different lengths (50 in., 84 in., and 100 in.), the aluminum extrusions provide continuous work support and an integral fence designed to hold a self-adhering tape measure and adjustable flip stops. The work supports are the heart of the system. Each support locks onto the saw with special mounting hardware. Adjustable legs extend from the underside.

The saw mounts on a compact folding stand. When set up on a wood subfloor where the legs can bite into the wood a little for stability, the system works great. There is no need to fasten the saw to the table because the work supports fasten directly to the saw. During initial setup, you align each support with the saw's fence and table surface. This alignment is maintained every time you set up. No other system has this feature.

The positive work stops and measuring system are precise enough to eliminate the need to pull out a handheld tape for every cut. The continuous work support is especially nice for cutting shorter pieces and long, floppy pieces of plastic or medium-density fiberboard (MDF) trim. If finish work is mostly what you do, then this stand is definitely the best choice.

Sawhelper U88

WWW.SAWHELPER.COM
\$539



Pros

- Excellent stops
- Full work support
- Integral tape measure

Cons

- Multiple parts to carry
- Unstable on uneven surface and on dirt/lawn
- Time-consuming initial setup



Positive stop for repeat cuts. Sawhelper's stops slide the full length of the work support and can be calibrated to the built-in tape measure. When not in use, the stop arm can be flipped up and out of the way.