Types of Hand Saws

Hand saws are convenient for a variety of basic projects – if you're sure to grab the right one for the job. Check out these tips to be sure you're using one that will help you get the job done.

1. MULTI-PURPOSE SAWS

• For a basic tool kit, a universal hand saw and a 3 in 1 saw are good choices. They cut most wood, laminate and plastic materials. So there's less guesswork about which saw to use. A tooth pattern with a deep gullet releases material as you cut – reducing friction.

2. HACKSAW

• This saw has a thin blade held by a bow-shaped frame. You can adjust the tension to make the blade more rigid – which helps prevent it from twisting or bending. The blade can be switched out for rougher or finer cutting, or reversed it so it's cutting on the pull stroke. This saw is the workhorse for trimming and cutting metal or plastic. Higher quality blades and sturdy construction that can keep the tension on the blade will make faster cuts.

3. CARPENTER OR CROSSCUT SAW

• Mostly used for cutting lumber - where you're cutting across the grain (as opposed to a rip cut where you are cutting with the grain). The teeth on its blade are shaped to crumble out wood between cuts. They commonly cut on the push stroke. The more teeth per inch (TPI) the finer the cut.

4. COPING SAW

• A coping saw has a deep-bowed shape and a very thin, replaceable blade and tension adjustment. The thin blade allows for cutting irregular shapes or patterns – so this is a good tool for cutting a curved profile on crown molding, baseboards, or chair rails.

5. JAB SAW

• Also known as keyhole, drywall or compass saws. They have a sharp tip and stiff blade for poking into a surface. Its shallow blade allows for cutting curves and contours. Use these saws to cut out a hole in a wall for a pipe or receptacle.

6. BACKSAW, MITER, DOVETAIL, OR PULL SAWS

• This family of saws is lightweight and distinguished by a rib on the edge. The teeth are closely spaced for fine cuts. They're typically used for precise work like wood joinery, or, when you're installing flooring and need to trim the bottom of a door casing. Many will cut on the pull stroke, using tension on the blade rather than force, giving you more control and precision.

HELPFUL TIPS:

• A quality blade takes fewer strokes to make a cut. And the blade won't dull as fast as a lower-quality saw.

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NOTE: Always follow manufacturer's recommended safety precautions and instructions for the products you use.