

Sources for Tools in 'The Anarchist's Tool Chest'

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Handplanes

- *Jack plane: Vintage Stanley No. 5*

I prefer the pre-war Stanleys, but I really like the Type 11 or earlier. Why? They are common, inexpensive and represent the peak of Stanley at its power. Want to learn about dating a handplane or the so-called "types" of planes? Check this link:

<http://home.comcast.net/~rexmill/planes101/typing/typing.htm>

Where should you buy one? I don't recommend eBay unless you are willing to kiss a lot of toads. The best solution is to use the vintage sources recommended in my book in the Appendix. I'd probably start my search with Walt Quadrato at [Brass City Records](#).

- *Plow plane: D.L. Barrett & Sons*

The Barrett plow is extraordinary, but I know that it is pricey. To contact Dan Barrett, visit their web site:

<http://www.dlbarrettandsons.com/Planes.html>

Other options: Also expensive but awesome: Jim Leamy Planes: <http://www.jimleamyplanes.com/> and the plow from Old Street: <http://planemaker.com/products.html>

If you don't want to spend that kind of money I recommend a vintage beech plow that you buy from someone you can trust, such as Lee Richmond from The Best Things: <http://thebestthings.com/woodplan.htm>

- *Rabbit/shoulder plane: Veritas Skew Rabbit Plane; Lie-Nielsen 073 Shoulder Plane*

The Veritas skew rabbit plane is the best on the market today. Period. You only need one, not both. Get the right-handed model if you are right-handed. Lefties should get the left.

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=59999&cat=1,41182,48945>

The 073 shoulder plane from Lie-Nielsen is the traditional choice, and it appeals to my eyes and hands. You can buy it directly from Lie-Nielsen here:

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=073>

Lots of woodworkers report they like the ergonomics of the Veritas Large Shoulder Plane. While it is not as comfortable for me to use, it works every bit as well as the Lie-Nielsen. Check it out here:

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=50273&cat=1.41182.48945>

- *Router plane: Lie-Nielsen Large Router Plane*

I prefer the Lie-Nielsen plane to the vintage Stanley model because the Lie-Nielsen has a depth stop that works. The only downside to the Lie-Nielsen is that it is an open-throat router. I hope some day they'll offer a closed-throat one.

The Lie-Nielsen is available here:

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?grp=1407>

The Veritas Large Router Plane is excellent, and with the company's new redesigned depth stop (which I just tried this week) makes it the equal of the Lie-Nielsen in my book. The fence on this model is not a substitute for a plow. Don't even think it.

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=52609&cat=1.41182.48945>

- *Block plane: Lie-Nielsen 60-1/2*

There are a lot of good block planes out there. A few great ones. And there is the Lie-Nielsen No. 60-1/2. The best.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?grp=1216>

Marking & Measuring Tools

- *Cutting gauge: Tite-Mark*

I am unapologetic about my undying love for this gauge. I owned one of the very first ones (it was swiped by someone) and have several in my chest. I have a little one and a big one. I prefer the big one. I don't use the accessory cutters for mortising or the extra rods. Just the stock gauge. Be sure to buy some replacement cutters because you will break some.

As I always, I prefer to buy tools from the maker. It helps them.

<http://www.glen-drake.com/>

- *Panel gauge: Lie-Nielsen Panel Gauge*

Vintage panel gauges can be pretty ragged out. The pin can be worn to a nub (easily fixed), the stem can wobble in the head when locked. And the head can slip. So you have to be real careful when buying vintage. So make your own or buy the Lie-Nielsen Panel Gauge. It's made well and offers the option of using a knife or a pencil.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?grp=1467>

- *6" Combination square, which has a removable 6" rule: Starrett 6" with a 4R rule*

I like Starrett and buy the brand whenever I can because they offer no apologies. It's great stuff. American made (for the most part). Lasts lifetimes. You can save a few bucks if you buy vintage, but you want to confirm the square is accurate before you buy. Otherwise it doesn't deserve the name "square."

Vintage Starrett is available from Walt Quadrato at [Brass City Records](#).

New stuff is available from McMaster-Carr: <http://www.mcmaster.com/#starrett-combination-squares/=cy4bii>

- *24" folding rule or 24" steel rule: Vintage brass-bound rules or a Starrett 24"*

Folding rules can be tough. Collectors are after the brass-bound ones that woodworkers want. So sometimes the users and the collectors have to compete. You can try eBay if you like. I did. I found about 50 percent of them were crap -- even when I was careful. The best way to buy these rulers is to go to a meeting of the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association or the Early American Industries Association. You'll find tons and be able to look them over carefully. Perhaps haggle with them a bit.

If you want a metal one (and are ready to pay for it), look to McMaster-Carr: <http://www.mcmaster.com/#starrett-combination-squares/=cy4bii>

- *12' tape measure: I'm not too picky: Starrett and Lufkin are the ones I buy.*

Because tape measures are for rough work, you don't have to be too careful. Get one that looks like the markings are fine. Don't get a huge long one; those are for carpenters. I've always bought my tape measures at home centers.

- *Marking knife: Blue Spruce Ultra-thin Small Knife*

There are lots of great marking knives out there. I am loyal to Blue Spruce because it was my first well-made marking knife. I am partial to the small knife with an "ultra" thin blade. This lets the blade sneak into any spot, especially when making dovetails with tightly spaced tails.

<http://www.bluesprucetoolworks.com/cgi/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=SMK2>

I also really like the knives from Czeck Edge. They are every bit as good, but are more ornately turned. It's an aesthetic choice between these two makers, not a functional one.

<http://www.czeckedge.com/>

- *Wooden winding sticks*

Make your own. Don't buy any. Please.

- *36" wooden straightedge*

Ditto.

- *Wooden try square, 12" blade*

Double ditto. Need plans for one? Order these from my former employer that shows how to build one from A.J. Roubo's books. This is what I use. I couldn't imagine anything better:

<http://www.shopwoodworking.com/product/1644/188>

- *Sliding bevel: Chris Vesper Woodworking Tools 7" Sliding Bevel*

Yes, it's expensive. Yes, you have to get it from Australia. But damn oh damn is it awesome. I resisted it. I tried. But it is the best.

https://www.vespertools.com.au/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product_id=4&category_id=16&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=34

The bevel that tweaks my American heart is the one offered by Patrick Leach through Superior Toolworks. It uses the same excellent locking design from the Vesper bevel, but it has a small button that locks the square at 90°. Brilliant. As I am writing this (in June 2011) the details have yet to be worked out.

Contact Leach through his web site: <http://supertool.com/>

- Dividers, two to four pair: Starrett No. 277 Dividers, 3" or 6"

There are dividers and there are the Starrett 277s. All others pale. When people handle mine, they are in awe. Seriously. I would not crap you on this point. Buy them from Lie-Nielsen because they are smart to recognize that these are the dividers against which all others are measured (ha-ha).

Use the 3" for dovetails. The 6" for other stuff.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=Dividers>

Essential Cutting Tools

- *Bevel-edge chisels 1/8", 1/4", 3/8", 1/2", 3/4" and 1-1/4": Lie-Nielsen or good vintage stuff.*

I have Lie-Nielsen bevel-edge chisels for the most part and end up using the 1/4", 1/2" and 3/4" for about 90 percent of my needs. My 1-1/4" chisel, a Buck Bros. tool, is great for deepening lines for sawcuts and for paring.

People get wrapped around the axle when it comes to edge retention. I am way more concerned about the proper shape of the tool so it does the job it should do. Sharpening a chisel is easy. Fixing the screw-up it makes from being the wrong shape is another matter.

With Lie-Nielsen chisels, you can choose high-carbon (O1) or alloyed (A2) steel. The O1 is

easier to sharpen but dulls faster. The A2 is more difficult to sharpen but seems to last longer. Everything is a trade-off with steel (and with woodworking in general).

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?cat=521>

If you want crazy edge retention, dip your toe into the world of Japanese chisels. There is a loan officer on premises there. They are excellent (but metric) tools.

- *Mortise chisels, 1/4" or 5/16": Ray Iles or Lie-Nielsen Sash Mortise Chisels*

So here is the problem: We now have a choice between the best sash mortise chisels made today (Lie-Nielsen) and the best tang chisels made today (Ray Iles). What to do?

It's a hard decision. The sash chisels are more durable than the tang – and that is critical with a mortise chisels. So that's a huge point for the Lie-Nielsens. But the tang chisels have an oval handle that is in line with the shape of the blade, so it's easy to position and steer the tool. Point: Ray Iles tang.

The socket chisels are easier to repair. The tang chisels are faster-cutting. I don't think there is a clear winner. I have used both. I like both.

My recommendation is to roll the dice if you can't try one or the other at a woodworking show. In this case, you will not lose.

Lie-Nielsen Sash Mortise Chisels: http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=mc_set

Ray Iles Tang Mortisers: http://www.toolsforworkingwood.com/Merchant/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=toolshop&Product_Code=MS-MORT.XX&Category_Code=&Search=iles%20mortise

- *Spokeshave: Veritas Spokeshave or Lie-Nielsen Small Spokeshave*

I like spokeshaves with mechanical adjusters – I just want you to know I have a bias. Other woodworkers love spokeshaves (and edge tools in general) that lack mechanical adjusters. If you like the precision of having a mechanical adjuster, get yourself a Veritas. They are excellent.

However, if you like beauty, then nothing – nothing – is prettier than the Lie-Nielsen small spokeshave. It is based on a Preston model and is a perfectly balanced and well-made tool. You cannot go wrong with either.

Veritas Spokeshave: <http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=49142&cat=1,50230&ap=1>

Lie-Nielsen Small Spokeshave: <http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=SBS>

- *Cabinet, modeling and rattail rasps: Auriou rasps*

The best rasps I've used are from Auriou, a small French company that makes them by hand. Yes, they are expensive. But dang they are worth it. You can buy Auriou from several sources in the United States. One good source is Lee Valley Tools:

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=53823&cat=1,42524>

I use the grain 9 for the cabinet rasp, the grain 15 for the modeler's rasp and the grain 13 for the round (rattail) rasp.

- *Card scrapers: Sandvik, Two Cherries or Lie-Nielsen*

The best card scrapers I've found have faces that have been milled flat. This makes it easier to prepare them for turning the hook. Sometimes you can find Sandvik scrapers that have their faces prepared. But usually they are sold as Bacho, and are generally no better than buying a chunk of sawplate steel.

The most consistent way to go is to buy the Two Cherries from Amazon or another supplier:

http://www.amazon.com/Cherries-520-5750-Scraper-Prepared-Edges/dp/B000JRDLP0/ref=pd_cp_hi_1

Barring that, the Lie-Nielsen scrapers or those from Lee Valley are good steel. But you will have some work to do when preparing the faces of the tool.

Striking & Fastening Tools

- *Chisel mallet: Blue Spruce 16 oz. round mallet*

Rarely does new technology thrill me. But this Blue Spruce mallet is one of the biggest exceptions. Its head is a resin-impregnated maple that looks and feels like wood -- not plastic. This mallet is good for everything but heavy mortising. For that you need a bigger shopmade mallet or (if you use Japanese chisels) a hammer.

<http://www.bluesprucetoolworks.com/cgi/commerce.cgi?search=action&category=MLTS&keywords=all>

- *Cross-peen hammer: Whatever fits your hand*

There are lots of excellent cross-peen hammers out there, including new ones from Lie-Nielsen and I hear another maker will be jumping in shortly as well. Even Stanley's version of the Warrington hammer doesn't completely suck eggs. With hammers, I always recommend you handle it before you buy it. People prefer different weights and handle shapes.

- *13 oz. to 16 oz. claw hammer: Whatever fits your hand*

Again, you have lots of good choices, from a vintage Maydole (the Mercedes of hammers) to a common Plumb. This sort of tool is best selected in person and with some nails and wood handy.

Please don't buy a hammer with a metal or composite handle. Wood is still the best.

- *Deadblow mallet: Champagne or its equivalent.*

I use the common Taiwanese Champagne mallet. It's cheap and widely available. If you want to go all old school, I recommend a new Garland mallet. They are made in the United States and can be purchased with a variety of heads, such as rawhide, and in many weights. They are very cool.

<http://www.garlandmfg.com/>

- *Nailsets: Whatever*

Nailsets should be hard at the points but easy to grip. This is a manufacturing feat that is within the grasp of most manufacturers. I've had only one nailset break on me in all my years.

- *Nail pincers: More whatever*

As long as the jaws close tightly and the steel isn't too soft, the pincers will last you a long time. If you are pulling a lot of nails and ruining your pincers, perhaps you should practice your hammer technique.

- *Set of slotted screwdrivers: SKG drivers*

I've not compared a lot of screwdriver brands – I want to be upfront about that. But I have looked at many of the brands with wooden handles (I dislike plastic) and the best of those are the German SKG drivers. The set includes everything you need for furniture making.

<http://www.garrettwade.com/german-pro-screwdriver-set/p/13G07.01/>

- *Screw tips for drill/drivers: Whatever is on sale*

If I built decks, I might give a damn about these tips for drill/drivers. There are quality differences among them. But because it takes me about five years to wear out a No. 2 tip, I don't really get worked up about this tool. I usually end up with a bunch of them in my junk drawer. I think they breed in there.

- *Sawnut drivers (if you have split sawnuts). Buy the driver that matches your saws*

Split nuts are a headache. They are fragile and they are tricky to tighten unless you have the right single-purpose tool. And so many sawnuts are so different you can end up with one driver for each of your saws. That's why I prefer the more modern nut with a straight slot.

But split nuts are popular among the traditionalists. So if you have split nuts, you need a matching driver. I usually make my own from some castaway screwdriver. But there are commercial ones available.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=SCR>

http://www.toolsforworkingwood.com/Merchant/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=toolshop&Product_Code=GT-SNSD&Category_Code=&Search=saw%20nut%20driver

- *Countersinks: Stanley or Lee Valley*

I have a Stanley countersink from the home center that leaves a rough finish, but it gets the job done. And because I am not going to let a screw's head show in a project, it's an OK tool for me. If you build stuff where the screw heads show, you need better equipment than the Stanley. I recommend the high-carbon countersinks sold by Lee Valley:

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/hardware/page.aspx?p=32308&cat=3,41306,41328>

- *10" brace: Vintage, vintage, vintage*

I have yet to see a new brace that I would use, much less purchase. Old braces are the best. They have wooden handles, better steel and better chucks. If the brace's pad is tight and the chuck works, you have a winner. If you want a really nice one, look for North Bros. "Yankee" models, or those from Millers Falls or Peck, Stowe and Wilcox (sometimes spelled PEXTO).

Good places to get braces online:

Walt Quadrato at [Brass City Records](#)

Sanford Moss: <http://www.sydnassloot.com/tools.htm>

Josh Clark: <http://hyperkitten.com/>

- *Hand drill: A Millers Falls or North Bros. model*

If you find a hand drill with smooth action and tight chuck, then you are in business. Good brands in this category are Millers Falls – the big dog – and North Bros. You'll find lots of other oddball brands, too. you shouldn't have to pay too much if you go vintage – less than \$10 if you are patient and picky.

If you want a restored hand drill, check out Wiktor Kuc's site:

<http://www.wktools.com/>

- *Set of 13 auger bits: Vintage Irwins*

I'm a big fan of Irwin-pattern bits because they are less likely to clog for me than the Jennings bits. But that's just me. Don't buy new Irwins -- they pretty much stink in my experience. But vintage ones can be picked up individually for less than a buck or as a complete set in a wooden box starting at about \$60. I've had really good luck getting Irwins from Walt Quadrato at [Brass City Records](#).

- Brad points 1/8", 3/16", 1/4", 5/16", 3/8", 7/16" and 1/2": Lee Valley Tools

Cheap brad points stink. The points are off-center (so what's the point?), they clog, they break

and they dull quickly. Don't bother with the home center stuff -- bits are critical tools and you get what you pay for.

The Lee Valley HSS lipped brads are the best I've used. They deserve a medal for these bits.

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=42247&cat=1.180.42240>

- *Birdcage awl: Czeck Edge Birdcage Awl*

The Czeck Edge version of this tool looks like an ornamental weapon – and that's a compliment. It works extremely well and is made to a really high level of craftsmanship.

http://czeckedge.com/store/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=2&products_id=8

- *Dowel plate: Make your own or buy the Lie-Nielsen*

A dowel plate made from a piece of scrap steel works fine. If you have access to a drill press and some good twist bits, that's a good solution. If you have neither, then purchase the Lie-Nielsen, which is well-made and features tapered holes. This makes your dowels easier to get loose from the plate.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=DP>

Saws

- *Dovetail saw: Lie-Nielsen Dovetail Saws*

Your dovetail saw needs to fit your hand and suit your work. Build a lot of drawers? You'll like the Gramercy. Like dovetailed carcasses? You'll like the Lie-Nielsen Progressive Pitch version. And if those don't suit your hand, buy a vintage one that will.

I have found that the Lie-Nielsen saws fit a lot of mitts -- except the very large and small. Get the thin plate version if you are experienced. Get the regular plate if you are new to dovetailing.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=DS>

- *Carcass saw: Gramercy Carcase Saw*

The best carcass saw being made today is by Gramercy. It's smooth-cutting, fast and comfortable. If it fits your hand, too, I know you will be thrilled with it.

http://www.toolsforworkingwood.com/Merchant/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=toolshop&Product_Code=GT-CSAW12.XX&Category_Code=&Search=gramercy%20carcase%20saw

- *Tenon saw: Wenzloff & Sons or Lie-Nielsen Thin-plate Tenon Saw*

I like the sash and tenon saws from Wenzloff & Sons that they make as part of the John Kenyon collection. They aren't the fastest tenon saws, but they are smooth and easy to control. Plus,

they are gorgeous.

<http://www.wenzloffandsons.com/component/virtuemart/early-saws/kenyon-seaton-chest-saws.html>

Another good option is the Lie-Nielsen 16" tenon saw with a thin plate. This saw is more aggressive.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=TS>

- *Panel saws (rip saw, crosscut saw, fine crosscut saw): Lie-Nielsen, Wenzloff & Sons, Medallion*

A lot of the modern makers make fine panel saws for furniture makers, including Lie-Nielsen, Wenzloff & Sons and Medallion Toolworks. You can't go wrong with any of those brands. Pick one that pleases your eye or pocketbook.

<http://www.lie-nielsen.com/catalog.php?sku=s-ps>

<http://www.wenzloffandsons.com/component/virtuemart/harvey-peace/panel-saws.html>

<http://www.medalliontools.com/Panel-Saws.html>

- *Flush cut saw: Lee Valley Flush Cut Saw*

I've burned through a lot of these saws. Some are too slow. Some mar your work. Some self-destruct. The best one I've encountered so far is the one from Lee Valley. It is priced fairly, is robust and quick.

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=50663&cat=1.42884>

- *Coping saw: Vintage (Millers Falls) or Olson*

It's difficult for me to recommend a coping saw because all of them have their weak points. The really good vintage ones can be hard to find. The Olson saws used to be really good, but they then got cheap and they aren't as nice. I haven't closed the book on this case.

<http://www.olsonsaw.com/>

Sharpening

- *Sharpening stones (honing and polishing): Natural oilstones or synthetic waterstones*

As I noted in the DVD, I've recently returned to oilstones now that I've found natural stones that are readily available and reasonably priced. A soft Arkansas and hard Arkansas will set you back less than \$100 and last lifetimes.

http://www.bestsharpeningstones.com/Arkansas_Sharpener_Stones.htm

<http://www.danswhetstone.com/>

If you want to go the waterstone route, I've had good experiences with Shaptons, King, Bester, Norton, Naniwa and others. They all do a good job. The secret is to pick a system and stick with it.

- *Strop: Hard leather plus Veritas honing compound*

Buy some hard leather and glue it to some wood. You made your strop. Then get some Veritas honing compound. One stick of this green stuff will last you forever.

<http://www.leevalley.com/us/wood/page.aspx?p=32984&cat=1.43072>

- *Grinder: Vintage electric or hand-cranked model*

An old Disco-era grinder (or earlier) will make you happy. Those were still made domestically and were heavy-duty compared to some of the imports. And it should cost you about \$20 at a garage sale.

If you want to go the hand-cranked route, you have tons of choices. Make sure it has its tool rest and that the shaft isn't bent. Other than that, it's hard to go wrong.

- *Burnisher: Arno Carbur 2*

This French-made burnisher can be tricky to find, but it is worth it. It is super-hard, and is easy to use. I prefer its short length to those of some traditional burnishers.

http://www.thebestthings.com/newtools/scraper_burnishers.htm