

## The Dad Checklist®: Toolbox Checklist

# Toolbox

From *The Dad Checklist*  
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Starting Nine, a History Compass imprint

Think about what you need day to day. Basics that you'll want to throw in the toolbox include screwdrivers and wrenches and simple hand tools. Then you start accumulating power tools and what you need for specialized tasks. Here is what I would put together for a basic set (buying decent quality will pay off in the long run):

**Screwdriver(s).** I'm sure you've found that the tool you need most around the house is a screwdriver. Since you don't always know if the screws are slotted or Phillips head (the one that looks like an **X**), multipurpose screwdrivers with tips you can change are useful, and they often come with two different size heads for each type of screw. Lots of versatility there. Your other option is to get two medium sized screwdrivers, one slotted and one Phillips head. Sears Craftsman and Stanley are good brands for hand tools.

Next Level: As you build your collection, you can invest in a set of different size single use screwdrivers for more torque with the larger screwdrivers and more precision with the smaller ones.

**Crescent Wrenches.** A medium sized crescent wrench, the kind that adjust with the thumb wheel is useful for gripping and turning nuts. Don't use pliers since they don't grip hard enough, will slip, round off the nut, and make it hard to loosen it.

Next Level: Add a couple different sized crescent wrenches or an adjustable wrench. Then add fixed, open-ended wrenches.

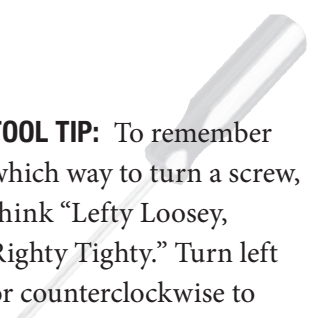
**Vise-grip Wrench.** Sometimes you need more gripping power, so a vise-grip wrench gives you that.

Next Level: Buy a socket wrench set.

**16 oz. Hammer.** For all sorts of jobs. Wooden handled are fine. Unless you are going to be framing houses all day, you don't need to spend a lot of money here.

Next Level: Mallet if you'll be doing woodworking or using chisels. Pry bar if you'll be pulling out a lot of nails or pulling apart a lot of wood. Staple gun if you'll be doing a lot of small projects where staples are better than nails (e.g., new screens).

**Tape Measure.** You may already have this for other uses, but a 25 foot tape measure is indispensable for measuring boards, hanging pictures, and



**TOOL TIP:** To remember which way to turn a screw, think "Lefty Loosey, Righty Tighty." Turn left or counterclockwise to loosen, right or clockwise to tighten.

**TOOL TIP:** Affix a white adhesive label on the side of the tape measure to have a handy place to write down measurements. Better yet, pick up a formica sample square and attach it to the side. You can write down measurements in pencil on your new handy surface and just wipe off or erase when done.

seeing if the couch will fit through the door.

Next Level: Combination Square. Steel ruler.

**Electric Drill.** Get a good cordless or a corded drill. You don't need a large voltage cordless drill unless you will be doing a lot of power drilling. Sometimes cordless drills, though, seem to run out of charge when you need them, so a corded drill is a good choice for around the house and provides a lot of drilling power. Some cordless screwdrivers do not provide enough power for serious work. With any drill, get screwdriver bits and some twist bits. Be sure your drill has variable speed and reverse to back screws out. I use a DeWalt for my corded and cordless drills.

Next Level: Corded or cordless drill, whichever you did not get the first time around. Speed changer to change bits quickly. Larger assortment of drill bits. More screwdriver bits.

**Utility Knife.** A utility knife is great for marking wood, cutting paper or vinyl, rounding wood edges like on a tenon, scraping off bits of paint or old adhesive.

Next Level: There isn't one. This is a basic.

**Wood Saw.** A multipurpose saw for small jobs. You can get ripping (cutting with the grain) and cross-cutting saws, but a general purpose saw usually is fine. I really like the Japanese saws. They are easy to use and make nice, clean cuts.

Next Level: A jigsaw makes short work of cutting off small pieces of wood or boards but is not really accurate or well-suited to larger jobs. For that, you would need at least a circular saw. A circular saw is great for cutting plywood, decking, and 2x4s. Once you've graduated and need something for more exact jobs, consider a table saw. The table saw is the centerpiece of a woodworker's workshop. As you begin building furniture, you might look at dovetail saws and other special saws.

**Hacksaw.** If you need to cut metal or plastic, you will need a hacksaw.

Next Level: Different blades for different materials.

**Pliers.** A pair of adjustable pliers should be in the toolbox.

Next Level: Needle nose pliers. Wire stripper.

**Putty Knives.** Good for applying all sorts of materials, especially spackle.

Next Level: Caulking gun.

**TOOL TIP:** Predrilling holes for screws helps prevent wood from splitting.

**Wood Glue.** 3 in 1 oil, WD 40.

**Sawhorses.** For supporting boards to be cut, elevating work.

Next Level: Workmate, a portable workbench that folds up, can clamp wood and can be used as a sawhorse.

**REALITY CHECK:** Giving your child his or her “own” set of tools and a small toolbox will make them feel like real workers. A tack hammer and a couple of screwdrivers, and something to measure with is all it takes to keep them busy.