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Bare Minimum
Starter Kit for
\$300



EQUIP YOUR WOODWORKING SHOP FOR LESS THAN **\$1,000**

UPDATED FOR 2026 WITH ADDED UPGRADES & INTERNATIONAL OPTIONS

by Steve Ramsey

"Oh sure... I could make that too if I had all those expensive tools."

YouTube commenter

As someone who has been making things out of wood since I was about 12, it's exciting to see that more people are woodworking now than ever before. The craft has exploded in popularity, but there are still too many people who want to get into woodworking who think they can't because they need to buy a lot of expensive tools.

I'm not going to sugarcoat it: most likely you will need to spend some money to get started. It's just not as much as you probably think. In fact, I'm going to show you how you can get the basic tools you need to **build almost any project for less than \$1,000.**



Don't make the same mistake most people do



"I've been using this 'entry level' drill press for over 15 years. It ain't pretty, but it still gets the job done!"

If you rush out on a spending spree to get tools, you will probably overspend and buy a bunch of stuff you don't really need.

Be a smart consumer and don't let tool companies tell you what you need to be a "real" woodworker.

When I was becoming a passionate weekend woodworker, I thought making dovetail joints was critical if I was going to call myself a woodworker. I bought an expensive dovetail jig... and used it twice in five years. It was complicated and took a lot of time to set up. When I eventually gave it away, I began to develop a different way of thinking about woodworking that was frugal and practical, and I called it **Woodworking for Mere Mortals.**

Only acquire a new tool if you need it to accomplish something that can't be done with your existing tools.

Since then, I have gotten rid of more tools than I have purchased. Which ones do I keep? Only the ones I use on a regular basis. My goal is to have fun building useful projects, not try to impress other woodworkers with my tools. Avoid thinking of your tools as a "collection." Instead, think of them as tools. To accomplish jobs. They aren't rare comic books.

Get some experience before you spend the big bucks

If you're buying new tools, start out with what I call "hobbyist grade" tools. These are affordable brands that cater to weekend woodworkers. Ryobi is a respected brand that sells tools for half of what other brands charge, and they're readily available at your local Home Depot (I have been using my Ryobi drill press for over 15 years!). Harbor Freight is another retailer that specializes in inexpensive tools. They will all get the job done.



"This brand new 10" compound miter saw costs around \$179."

Eventually, you may decide to upgrade a tool to one that's more powerful or has more features. But you won't know which additional features you need until you've spent a lot of time in the shop using that tool. So gain experience and knowledge with something affordable, and focus on making cool stuff!

Get the tools you need without breaking the bank



I want to share my list of recommended tools that you can use to make everything in my course, The Weekend Woodworker, from a coffee table to a curio cabinet.

You can acquire all these tools for **under \$1,000**. You might even already own some of the tools on my list, and only need to invest in a few tools to get started.

And don't forget that you have another option: to buy used tools. Unlike tech gear, power tools don't fundamentally change over the years and become obsolete. On my show, you've probably seen me use a lathe that my dad purchased over 60 years ago. It's quirky, doesn't have a digital readout, and takes longer to set up than a newer lathe. But the basic function is the same: it's a motor that spins something.

A few sources for used tools are Craigslist, BuyMyStuff, and Facebook Marketplace. All of these connect you with local sellers, so there is no shipping needed. I have also found great buys at estate sales and garage sales. Sometimes these sellers are moving and highly motivated to get rid of great tools. I picked up some terrific clamps once at a garage sale for a buck a piece. Seriously, you can never have enough clamps!



Not ready for \$1,000? Try it for \$300 first

Good news! You don't *actually* need \$1,000 worth of tools to find out if you love woodworking. With just these basics, you can build the **Basic Mobile Workbench**: the first project every Weekend Woodworker tackles!

It doesn't take up much space, you'll need one anyway, and by the time you're done, you'll know if woodworking is for you. It's also a serious workhorse that I designed to be customizable. Many students have told me it's still their favorite project, even years later.



Want To See Exactly How It's Built?

As part of **The Weekend Woodworker**, I filmed the entire **BMW** build step by step. You can watch the first video and download the plans for FREE to see if this is for you.

[Watch the FREE BMW Build Video →](#)

The Bare Minimum Starter Kit

Everything you need to build your first workbench

Circular saw (Ryobi 7-1/4" or similar)	\$79
<i>Your main cutting tool. Handles plywood and lumber with ease.</i>	
Cordless drill (Ryobi ONE+ or similar)	\$89
<i>For drilling holes and driving screws. The tool you'll reach for most.</i>	
Drill bit & driver kit (120pc)	\$27
<i>All the bits and tips you need in one box. Will last you years.</i>	
Measuring tape (FastCap 16ft)	\$9
<i>The best tape for woodworking. Accurate and easy to read.</i>	
Speed square or a combination square	~\$10
<i>For marking straight lines and checking 90° angles quickly.</i>	
2x quick-release clamps (Bessey 24" or similar)	\$28
<i>Hold pieces together while glue dries or while you work on them.</i>	
Wood glue, screws, sandpaper	~\$20
<i>Consumables you'll restock as needed. Start with the basics.</i>	
Safety glasses + dust mask	~\$35
<i>Always protect your eyes and lungs. Non-negotiable.</i>	
Total	~\$297

You probably already own some of these. Check your garage before you buy!

If you're hooked (and I think you will be), the full tool list on the next page covers everything you need for all 6 projects in **The Weekend Woodworker course**.

The Complete Tool List

For every tool, I'm giving you two options: the most affordable choice that gets the job done, and a solid upgrade. I've personally used most of these. The "most affordable" column is what I used in the **The Weekend Woodworker (TWW)** course videos. The "upgrade" column is what I currently use for Woodworking for Mere Mortals.

Note: Cordless tools may come with or without batteries and chargers. Look carefully. Always have two batteries. Save money by going corded.

TOOL	MOST AFFORDABLE	SOLID UPGRADE
POWER TOOLS		
Table saw	RYOBI 15 Amp 10 in. Compact Portable Corded Jobsite Table Saw with Folding Stand \$229 Home Depot → <i>Consider going for higher-end option right away. Cheap table saws can be scary for beginners.</i>	Ridgid 15A 10" portable pro Jobsite Table Saw w/ stand \$549 USED IN TWW VIDEOS Home Depot →
	SawStop CTS-120A60 Compact Table Saw \$975 Amazon → <i>I've used this entry-level SawStop tablesaw and it's pretty good. For people whose main concern is safety.</i>	
Miter saw	RYOBI 14 Amp Corded 10 in. Compound Miter Saw with LED Outline Indicator \$179 THIS IS THE SAW I USE Home Depot →	RIDGID 15 Amp Corded 12 in. Dual Bevel Sliding Miter Saw with 70 Deg. Miter Capacity \$349 Home Depot → <i>This is a great upgrade.</i>
Sander	DEWALT Random Orbital Sander, 5" \$79 THE SANDER I USE Home Depot → Amazon →	DEWALT 20V MAX Orbital Sander Cordless, 5-Inch Sander Tool with battery and charger \$140 Amazon → <i>I haven't used this, but it's a good option if you prefer cordless.</i>
Drill & driver	RIDGID 8 Amp 3/8 in. Corded Drill/Driver R70011 \$60 Home Depot → <i>A good tool that can get you started.</i>	RYOBI ONE+ 18V Cordless 2-Tool Combo Kit with Drill/Driver, Impact Driver, 2 Batteries, and Charger \$149 THIS IS THE DRILL AND DRIVER I USE Home Depot →
Jigsaw	DEWALT Jig Saw, 5.5-Amp, Corded (DW317K) \$105 THIS IS THE JIGSAW I USE Home Depot → Amazon →	DEWALT 20V MAX Cordless Jig Saw (Tool Only) \$129 Home Depot → Amazon → <i>Good option if you prefer cordless and are in the Dewalt battery ecosystem. You'll need to buy the battery and charger separately</i>

TOOL	MOST AFFORDABLE	SOLID UPGRADE
Circular Saw	Ryobi 13 Amp corded 7-1/4" circular saw \$79 USED IN TWV VIDEOS Home Depot →	RIDGID 15 Amp 7-1/4" Circular Saw \$119 THIS IS THE CIRCULAR SAW I USE Home Depot → <i>Much more solid than the Ryobi.</i>

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

Bit Set	120pc Drilling and Screw Driving Bit Set \$27 Amazon → <i>I like that this kit comes with a bit grip for those little tip things</i>	
Shop Vacuum	RIDGID 12 Gal. 5.0 Peak HP NXT Shop Vacuum \$109 I USED THIS FOR MANY YEARS Home Depot →	RIDGID 4 Gal. 5.0 Peak HP Portable Shop Vacuum \$109 THIS IS THE ONE I CURRENTLY USE Home Depot → <i>With a dust separator. It's more compact.</i>
	Bessey 24" bar clamps \$14 each (need two) THESE ARE THE ONES I USE Amazon →	Pack of 10 Heavy Duty Woodworking Bar Clamps \$76 Amazon → <i>This looks like a great way to start a clamp collection.</i>
Pipe Clamps (optional)	PONY 2-Pack Pipe Clamp Fixture for 1/2 Inch Black Pipe \$30 THESE ARE THE ONES I USE Amazon →	
	1/2 in. x 48 in. Black Pipe to go with the PONY fixtures \$14 each (need two) Home Depot → <i>You can get black pipes in all different lengths. I recommend buying these locally.</i>	
Strap Clamp (optional)	Bessey Strap Clamp \$25 THIS IS THE ONE I USE Amazon → <i>It's optional, but I highly recommend getting one!</i>	
Dado Blades (optional)	Tooltech 8" stacking dado blade set \$55 Amazon →	Mibro Group Stacking Dado Blade Set \$75 THIS IS THE SET I USE Amazon →
	<p>Note: European table saw users will need to use a regular blade, but make multiple passes to create dados. Or use a router.</p>	

TOOL	MOST AFFORDABLE	SOLID UPGRADE
Measuring tape	FastCap 16 Foot Pro Carpenter Standard Reverse Measuring Tape THIS IS THE ONE I USE Amazon → <i>Any tape will do, but this is the best one specifically for woodworking!</i>	\$9
	Irwin 16-Inch X 24-Inch Framing Square Amazon →	\$16
Squares	IRWIN 16" Combination Square Amazon →	\$18

SAFETY GEAR

Push Block (optional)	Microjig GRR-RIPPER Amazon → Microjig → <i>Needless to say, I highly recommend getting a couple of these!</i>	\$50
Safety Glasses	NoCry Clear Safety Glasses for Men and Women with Anti-Fog and Scratch Resistant Wrap Around Lenses, Adjustable Temples and Nose Pads Amazon →	\$14
Hearing Protection	Cyber Acoustics Professional Safety Lightweight Ear Muffs for Hearing Protection and Noise Reduction Amazon →	\$16
Dust Mask	BASE CAMP M PRO Dust Mask, All day Comfortable Reusable Respirator Mask Amazon →	\$21
	3M Organic Vapor respirator for painting and finishing Amazon →	\$36

TOTAL	Estimated total (most affordable) ≈\$990	Estimated total (solid upgrade) ≈\$1,840
	Estimated total (incl. all optional) ≈\$1,200	

Don't live in the US? I've got you covered.

Most of the brands on the previous pages are US-based, and some retailers like Home Depot block non-US traffic entirely. But the good news is there are great alternatives available almost everywhere. Here's what to look for in your region.

A note on Ryobi: it's available in many countries outside the US, including the UK, EU and Australia. In some regions, it's no longer a budget option, but it's still worth considering.

Table saws

Einhell and **Scheppach** are the usual budget options. They'll get the job done, but this is the first tool I'd recommend upgrading when you can. Cheap table saws can feel imprecise and intimidating for beginners. Better options: **Evolution** (great UK-based brand), **Bosch**, **Metabo**, **DeWalt**, **Hikoki**, **Triton** and similar.

Miter Saws

Einhell, **Parkside** and **Scheppach** for budget (less precise and less sturdy). For upgrades, look at **Metabo**, **Bosch**, **Makita**, **Hikoki** or similar.

Drills & drivers

Parkside, **Erbauer**, **Einhell**, **Macallister** and **Black & Decker** are all fine for occasional use. They can be faulty at times, but service support is usually quick and hassle-free. Upgrades: **Bosch**, **Makita**, **DeWalt**.

Sanders

Hard to beat the **DeWalt** recommended in the main list for value. Available internationally via Amazon. Don't worry about going cordless, you'll have a vacuum hose attached most of the time, so one more cord is no problem.

Jigsaws & circular saws

Einhell, **Erbauer** and **Parkside** for budget options. **Bosch**, **Makita**, **DeWalt** and **Hikoki** for upgrades. **Erbauer** is a *Screwfix* house brand in the UK, decent quality at budget prices.

Shop vacuums

Kärcher WD 3, the gold standard in Europe. Affordable, durable, available almost everywhere (~€75). The **WD 4** is a great upgrade and often found on promos.

Clamps & accessories

Bessey (German, available globally), **Wolfcraft** for affordable bar clamps, **Stanley** for measuring tools. Clamps, squares, tape measures, safety gear, glue and screws are universal. Buy local.

Where to buy locally

A quick heads up: big box stores are convenient when you need something today, but they often charge more than online retailers or local independent shops. Always compare prices online before heading to the store, you might save quite a bit.

UK: Screwfix, B&Q, Wickes

France: Leroy Merlin, Castorama

Australia: Bunnings, Total Tools

Used tools: Facebook Marketplace, Gumtree, eBay, local classifieds

Germany / Central EU: Bauhaus, Hornbach, OBI

Netherlands / Benelux: Gamma, Praxis, Hubo

Scandinavia: Bauhaus, Jula, Biltema

Online everywhere: Amazon (search by product name on your local store)

Tools you'll want once sawdust flows through your veins.

None of these are needed for The Weekend Woodworker course. But once you've completed a few projects and start thinking "I wonder if I could build that," these are the tools that open up a whole new world of possibilities. There's no rush. Add them one at a time as your projects demand them.

GET THIS FIRST



Router

Opens up edge profiles, decorative details, dadoes and serious joinery. Once you have one, you'll wonder how you ever worked without it. Easily the most versatile "next" tool to buy. If you only add one thing from this list, make it a router.

Budget: Ryobi, Bosch Colt. **Upgrade:** DeWalt, Makita, Bosch 1617.

Power Tools

Bandsaw

Curved cuts, resawing thick lumber into thinner boards, cutting irregular shapes. Lets you work with wood in ways a table saw simply can't.

Budget: WEN, Ryobi, Porter-Cable
Upgrade: Rikon, Jet, Laguna

Drill press

Precise, perfectly straight, repeatable holes. Especially useful for shelf pin jigs, dowel joinery, and anywhere accuracy matters more than speed.

Budget: WEN, Ryobi
Upgrade: Jet, Delta, Rikon

Brad nailer / nail gun

Speeds up assembly dramatically. Perfect for attaching trim, backs, and thin panels. Holds pieces in place while glue dries so you can keep moving.

Budget: Ryobi, Bostitch
Upgrade: DeWalt, Makita

Belt sander

Fast stock removal for flattening, smoothing, or shaping large surfaces. Saves a lot of time compared to an orbital sander on big pieces.

Budget: Ryobi, Black & Decker
Upgrade: Makita, DeWalt

Accessories & extras

Forstner bits

Clean, flat-bottomed holes with smooth edges. Essential for concealed hinges, dowel holes, and decorative work. A set of common sizes covers most projects.

Good options: Freud, Steelex, FAMAG

Spindle sander

Smooths curved and irregular edges that a regular sander can't reach. If you start making projects with curves and arches, this becomes essential.

Budget: WEN, Triton
Upgrade: Jet, Ridgid

Gluebot

Precision glue applicator for clean, even glue lines without the mess. Small investment, big difference in the quality and speed of your glue-ups.

UPDATED FOR 2026 — NEW TOOL LIST, NEW INSIGHTS FROM STEVE

"Wait, you *built* that?!"

*"That's what my wife said when I finished my first coffee table.
She couldn't believe I made it."*

— Weekend Woodworker student

Join over **30,000 Weekend Woodworkers** who started right where you are.

30,000+
Students

6
Weekend
projects

1.9M
YouTube
subscribers

15+
Years
teaching



Hey! I'm Steve Ramsey. I've been teaching woodworking on YouTube for over fifteen years. Millions of people worldwide have watched my videos, and tens of thousands have used my course to build their first projects. I believe anyone can build unique, practical, beautiful pieces out of wood.

You don't need fancy tools, a big garage, unlimited time, or years of experience!



YouTube can only take you so far. In my free videos, I can't show every step. The Weekend Woodworker course is different. Every cut, joint, and finish are shown in detail. No guessing! It's a step-by-step instructional with detailed plans where you follow along and get it right the first time.



6 complete weekend projects that take you from a beginner to a confident woodworker: each designed to be finished in a weekend so you actually complete what you start...

Even if you don't build all of them, every video teaches skills you'll carry into whatever you build next.



12 step-by-step video tutorials where I show you my every single step. It's the closest you'll get to standing next to me in my shop...

You'll avoid the costly mistakes that beginners make: the ones that waste wood, waste time, and make you want to quit.

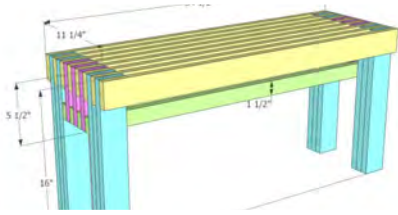


15+ skill walkthroughs that break down each technique before you touch a tool, so you always know what you're doing and why...

Once you master these fundamentals, you'll look at furniture in a store and say "I could build that" and mean it!



13+ tool demonstrations where I walk you through how to operate each tool effectively and safely. Scary tools become like a good old friend you've known forever...



Printable plans with US and Metric measurements: clear, detailed, designed by me personally. These may be some of the best woodworking plans you've ever seen...



Uses only the tools on this list. In the spirit of Woodworking for Mere Mortals, I don't use any expensive equipment, I don't have a huge workshop, and no fancy materials are required!



Lifetime access. Too cold to build right now? Busy schedule? Do it whenever you're ready. The course isn't going anywhere. Work through the projects at your own pace.

Three Bonuses Included FREE:

BONUS #1

Basic Mobile Workbench

Full tutorial + plans

Value: \$47 — Free!

BONUS #2

How to Read Plans + Glossary

Never get lost again

Value: \$27 — Free!

BONUS #3

Sell Your Projects Online

Make money from your builds

Value: \$27 — Free!

What Students Are Building:



Start Building This Weekend →

Instant Access · Lifetime Updates · All Skill Levels · US & Metric Plans

30

30-Day Money-Back Guarantee.

Not for you? Full refund, no questions asked.

What happens when you click? You get instant access to the full course, all plans, tool lists, and the BMW bonus project. No waiting. Start your first build this weekend!