

INTRODUCTION TO Marking Devices

From the editors of
CANADIAN
Woodworking
& HOME IMPROVEMENT

MECHANICAL PENCIL

Always just a click away from being perfectly sharp, a mechanical pencil is an accurate and simple marking device. Available in a few different widths, the most appropriate for shop use is probably the wider version at 0.7mm.

LEAD PENCIL

Available in the common style or a carpenter's version (with a larger, rectangular or elliptical cross-section), as well as in many different hardnesses. It's great to have a selection of sharp wooden lead pencils around. Don't forget the sharpener.

MARKING KNIFE

When an accurate mark is needed to help locate a sharp chisel, a sharp marking knife is the perfect solution. Generally speaking, make multiple light scoring cuts, as opposed to a single, heavy cut, so the knife doesn't mistakenly follow the grain.

MARKING GAUGE

When scoring a mark a certain distance away from an edge is needed, a marking gauge is accurate and saves time. Available with dual rods for simultaneously marking both sides of joints like a tenon or groove. Multiple light passes are usually more accurate than one heavy pass. Quality gauges are equipped with either a wheel or knife rather than a pin.

COMBINATION SQUARE

While it will take care of the basics (marking a 90° and 45° line), it also can be used to draw a fairly accurate line a certain distance away from an edge, as well as check a surface for level. The small awl included in the tip of the head can be used in place of a marking knife and awl.

ENGINEER'S SQUARE

Simple and accurate, an engineer's square will assist with machine setup and joinery layout. Graduations are generally not included, as this square is more about checking for extreme accuracy on what should be a 90° corner. Unless you're setting up larger machines, a small- to medium-sized square will likely work best.

SADDLE SQUARE

Mainly used for marking a line on two perpendicular surfaces at once. Also available in a larger size, it's generally used for 2x4 construction purposes. A simple, cost-effective tool.

SLIDING BEVEL

Useful when transferring angles other than 90° and 45° (think everything from interior trim to hand-cut dovetails). A knob or lever is loosened so the blade can be adjusted before being locked back in place. Some woodworkers have a couple of these on hand for when they're working with multiple angles at once.

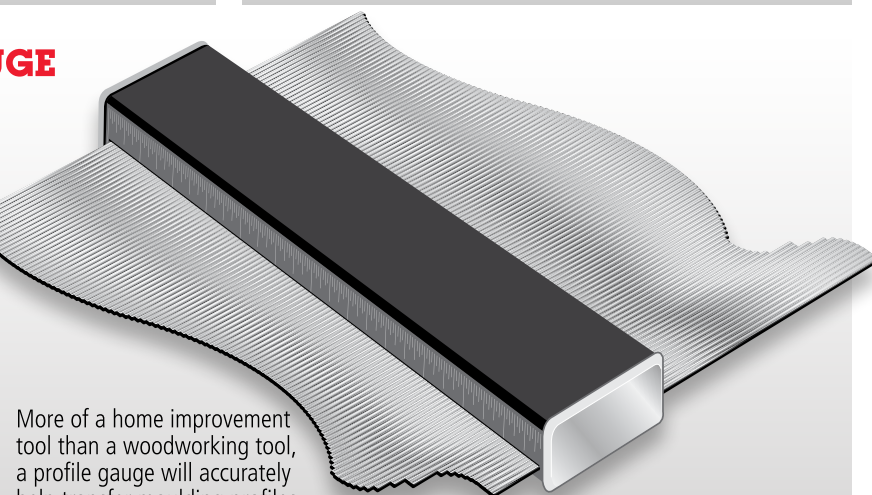
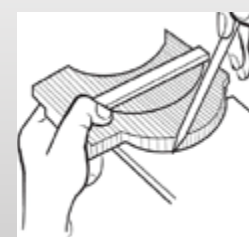
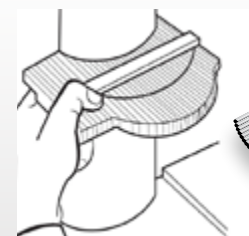
DOVETAIL MARKER

Similar to a saddle square, but includes one angled edge on each side of the tool for marking dovetail angles. Available in a variety of different ratios or angles depending on the type of dovetails you're marking.

TRAMMEL HEADS/COMPASS

For drawing circles or arcs of almost any radius. A compass is great for smaller curves, while trammel heads are limited only by the length of the beam you make for them. If straight lines are what you design your furniture around, grab a trammel head set, get familiar with your bandsaw and hand tools, and start adding some graceful curves to your work.

PROFILE GAUGE



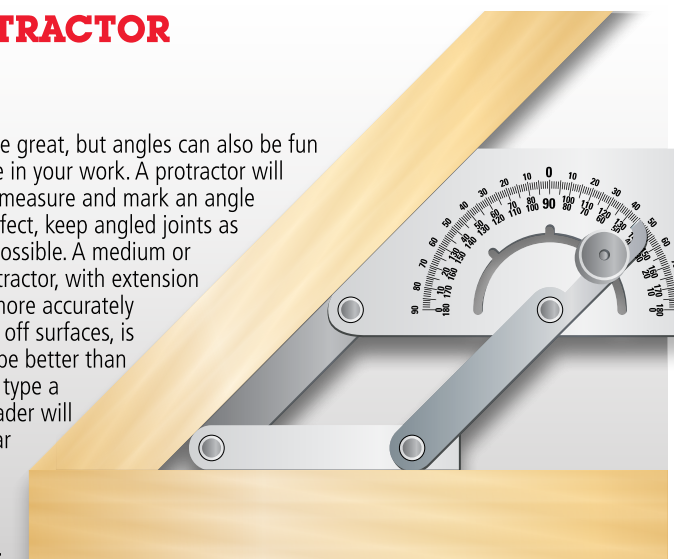
More of a home improvement tool than a woodworking tool, a profile gauge will accurately help transfer moulding profiles and unique shapes to a workpiece so they can be trimmed accordingly. Turners have also used them to assist with accurately replicating a portion of their turning.

FRENCH CURVE

Once you're familiar with your new trammel heads, step it up a notch and bring a French curve into your design process. For smoothing hand-drawn arcs, as well as fairing transitions between a curve and a straight line, this is where design really starts to take off. They also just look cool hanging on your shop wall. For proof, check out Steve Der-Garabedian on page 50 in this issue.

PROTRACTOR

Curves are great, but angles can also be fun to include in your work. A protractor will help you measure and mark an angle and, in effect, keep angled joints as tight as possible. A medium or large protractor, with extension arms to more accurately reference off surfaces, is going to be better than the small type a fourth grader will be familiar with, though both can be useful.



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