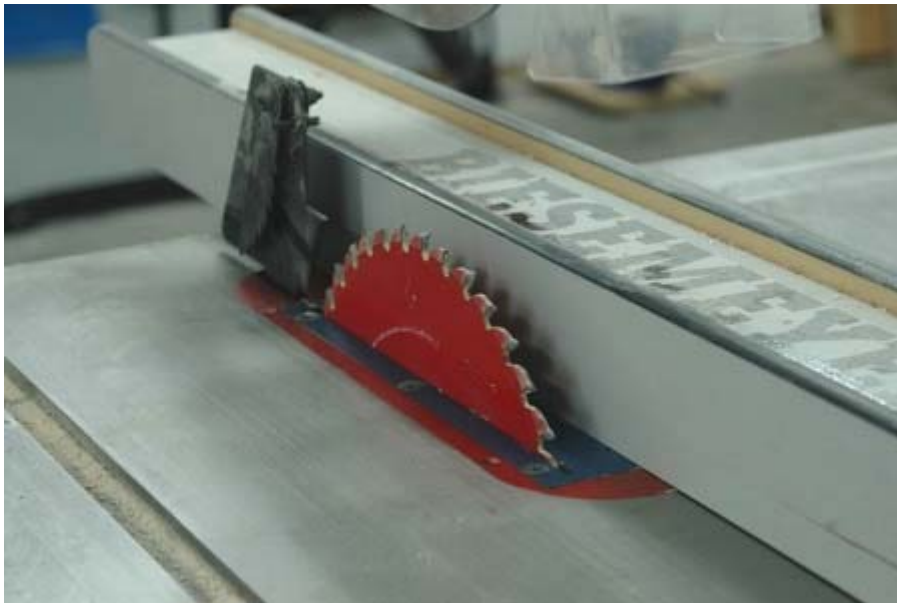


Getting the Most from Your Tablesaw

Blades on new tablesaws are like the tires you find on new cars -- serviceable,



but nothing special. That's because tool manufacturer's know that no one ever chooses a particular tablesaw because it comes with a great blade. But once you get back to your shop, the situation is entirely different. That's where tablesaw blades

matter. In fact, they're a make or break detail when it comes to the performance of your saw.

Maximizing the effectiveness of your tablesaw by investing in good blades has to happen in the right order if you want to get the most from your money. Some blades make more sense to buy initially, because they're more widely useful. But as you gain experience, various other types of specialty blades are worth looking at.

General-purpose combination blades are made for both crosscutting and ripping, and though they remain a good choice, there's another option. Today's newest combination blades have an evenly spaced arrangement of teeth, and despite this plain appearance, these blades deliver a surprising improvement in performance. They'll do an excellent job ripping 2-inch thick hardwood, then immediately complete a nearly splinter-free crosscut on veneered plywood. For general-purpose use with solid woods, and sheet goods, this one blade is really all you need.

Will you be ripping lots of solid wood in your workshop? Today's newest ripping blades run smoothly enough to leave a glue-ready edge behind. If your saw is tuned and cutting properly, you can go right from saw to glue-up clamps



with no need for jointing. The safest ripping blades also have anti-kickback extensions in front of each tooth, too.

Deciding between a thin-kerf or full-width blade?

Thin kerf blades make it easier for low-power saws to cut through heavy wood, but not

without a cost. These lighter blades are more likely to vibrate during a cut, leaving a surface that is less smooth than what you get from a full width blade.

Sawing melamine and other factory coated materials is a specialized job because the surface layer is so fragile and easily splintered. The simplest melamine blades are designed to produce a smooth cut on the top surface of the material only. If you need smooth results on both the top and bottom surface, be sure to look for a double-sided laminate blade.

You can spend a lot or a little on a tablesaw blade, and ironically, a cheap blade will cost you the most, and not just in the long run. The moment you use it, you'll pay for your 'bargain' with less-than-ideal cuts. You'll pay again when that cheap blade doesn't sharpen well, and when you have to toss it because it's junk after a few years. The \$20 or \$30 extra you'll pay for today's best blade technology, simplifies your workshop efforts and helps raise your work to breakthrough levels.

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