

## Miter Saw Magic: Getting the most from your workshop workhorse

---



The miter saw is a mainstay of workshop success because it makes accurate crosscuts so easy. But there are three reasons your miter saw might not be performing optimally: critical adjustments ignored, key techniques over

looked and blade options misunderstood. But once you get these details right, it'll boost the quality of your miter saw performance almost automatically.

Mitre saws everywhere usually come out of the box adjusted well enough to seem accurate, yet far enough from true to get you into at least a little trouble. That's why it pays to check and adjust your saw so it cuts truly square whenever the number dial says it should.

The best way to verify the accuracy of your saw is by making a cut across a piece of wood, then check the results with an all-metal engineer's square. Don't trust a metal-and-wood try square for machine set up. They're simply not reliable enough.

If your test cut deviates even a little from square, the mitre setting of your saw needs to be adjusted. The easiest saws can be tweaked from above, by loosening, moving and retightening the detent plate that controls mitre angles. If your machine is a "compound" miter saw, complete a similar cut-and-check test to verify the accuracy of its bevel setting, too.

Impatience is one cause of a common miter saw mistake that's easy to avoid. When completing critical cuts on trim or cabinet face frames, move the wood slightly away from the blade immediately after the cut, then raise the blade up clear from the wood. If you get in a hurry and raise a spinning blade up passed a fresh-cut edge, it can (and usually does) damage the newly sawn surface. This is especially likely if the blade is slowing down and wobbling as it comes to a halt.

***Got a bunch of parts to cut all the same length?*** Be sure to use a stop



block clamped to the fence to automate the process. A wood screw driven into the end of this block allows the cut size of your parts to be tweaked very finely using a screwdriver. Simply tighten or loosen the screw for accurate micro adjustments back and forth. This screw also eliminates inaccuracies caused by sawdust build up by keeping your work

piece away from the end of the stop block.

***Are you cutting long wood with no bench?*** Make three or four support tees out of scrap. They're great for accurately sawing wood on a floor deck or concrete slab.



Stock saw blades that come on saws from the factory are okay for rough cuts, but miter saws were made for much more than this. You'll enjoy best performance from full-width, carbide blades made especially for crosscutting. If your saw spins a 10" blade, look for a model with 80 teeth. The best 12" diameter cross cutting blades,

typically, have 96 teeth. With the right kind of blade, miter saws are also excellent for cutting non-ferrous metal like aluminium, copper and brass.

Take the time to pamper your chopsaw, and it'll be that much easier to move one big step closer to the kind of workshop success that makes woodworking worthwhile.

To learn more and see additional content such as articles, plans and instructional videos visit

[www.freudlearninglibrary.com](http://www.freudlearninglibrary.com)