



Not Your Father's Pegboard

An organized wall of tools gives you instant access

BY HANK GILPIN

The first thing people notice when they visit my shop is the tool rack. Not the wood scattered and stacked everywhere, not the furniture under construction, not the big old machines. Nope, they always walk over to the wall of open tool and clamp storage and say, "Wow, your shop is so organized."

I'm never sure if the shop's neatness is a letdown or a pleasant surprise. But it doesn't really matter. I didn't build my tool rack for display. I am neat by nature and by need fairly organized. We do a lot of handwork at my shop, and because I always have at least one other person working with me, I wanted a rack that would put the full array of hand tools within arm's length of two benches.

The wall's layout is simple and practical. Each of the primary tools—every plane, chisel, file, measuring device and saw—has a spot to sit in and can be taken out without moving anything else. Blades stay sharp, squares stay true and saws stay straight. The slanted shelves for the planes and chisels make the tools easy to locate and grab. A strip of wood tacked along the lower edge of these shelves keeps the tools from sliding off, and $\frac{5}{16}$ -in.-sq. strips between the tools keep them spaced properly.

The shallow shelves above the plane and chisel racks hold sanding blocks, mallets, drills and the less frequently used planes and scrapers. At the bottom of the rack is hanging storage for clamps and shelving for the myriad blocks, wedges, battens and pads used with the clamps.

I didn't rush into the rack's design. I thought about my work habits and sketched out a number of alternative arrangements. But I built the entire project in one day. I used construction-grade plywood and nailed and glued it together. I don't think I could come up with a simpler, easier-to-use solution. After 24 years of use, it serves the shop well. □

Hank Gilpin makes custom furniture in Lincoln, R.I.

Organization out in the open. It's easier to stay organized when tool storage is close at hand and unobstructed. The convenience of the author's simple system keeps tools from piling up on the bench.



Photos: Jonathan Binzen