

Quick Tips

Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

Color Coding

Color code all hand tools—ATG tape, tape measures, screwdrivers, wire cutters, staplers, drills, etc. Use colored electrical tape to color each table (blue table, red table, orange table, for example) or use two colors (a blue/yellow table). Every hand tool that goes on that table should be color coded so if a blue gun ends up on a green table, you know it's not supposed to be there. That way every one can keep track of their tools. How you code each table depends on what type of table you have. If there's a foam board top, for example, you can tape it down with the colored tape. For other tables, you can just run the tape along the top edge.



—Jim Parrie, Owner, Millennial Technologies

Adjustable Worktables

Lower back problems and carpal tunnel syndrome are more common than ever before. By considering ergonomics and shop safety along with organized workflow, you can improve productivity while reducing lost workdays. One easy way to do that is to provide workstations with adjustable table heights. Table heights affect employee safety and comfort. This is especially true when employees share production workstations. Tables used for mounting, matting, or fitting can be modified by adding adjustable leg components. When retrofitting, allow for an adjustability range of 12 inches. For someone who's six-foot-two, an ideal table height is around 40 inches. For someone who's five-foot-two, however, an ideal table height is in the 28 to 30-inch range. This is especially helpful with mat cutting tables where an employee stretches while working. According to the OSHA guidelines, the ideal angle for a body to bend is 10 percent. Adjustable worktables ensure that the facility can meet that guideline easily.



—Paul MacFarland, Founder, Art Preservation Resources

Joining Plastic Moulding

When cutting plastic moulding on a double mitre saw, with angles set at a perfect 45 degrees, you will normally get a frame that has outside gaps at each corner. This happens because plastic is generally a dense material, and the V-shaped nail displaces the plastic during joining, causing a false outside gap.

What some companies are doing to address this problem—those making photo frames or other relatively small frames—is to slightly change the angles on the saws. The angle is changed to create a small inside gap that measures between 5 and 10 thousandths of an inch at each corner before joining.

You are creating a gap on the inside of the corner so that when you put it all together with a V-shaped nail (if the adjusted angle is correct) all corners should look tight and any gaps should be minimized.

These adjustments are very small. The blade tips at the front of the saw will be closer together, than before the adjustment. This creates the inside gap on the cut moulding rails. On a CTD saw the pivot bolt in the back is adjusted after loosening the locking screw, and on a Pistorius MN saw the inside adjusting screw at the rear is tightened after loosening the outside screw.

After a test cut in the newly adjusted saw, place two rails of the frame in a 90 degree fence, such as in a joiner, and check the inside gap created. If it looks to be 5 to 10 thousandths of an inch, then join one frame and check the results.

This technique can also be used when working with MDF mouldings, which can exhibit the same characteristics as plastic, because of its density.



—Jim Burke, President, Machines, Etc.

Contributors to this column are industry members who have experience in the operation of a production framing facility. If you have a tip of your own, please send it to Production Tips, PFM Production, PO Box 102, Morganville, NJ 07751.