

Quick Tips

Easy ideas to improve production efficiency

The Indispensable Dial Indicator

A Dial Indicator with a magnetic base should be standard equipment in any shop that has at least one double miter saw. With multiple saws, it's a must. It should read at least in thousandths of an inch and have a simple arm to adjust for measuring saw blades. Dial Indicators can measure blade run-out, spindle face errors, and pivot bearing problems.



First, use it to check blade run-out every time you change a set of blades. On a good set of framing blades of 10" to 12" diameter, run-out should be less than .004" total. If it is much greater, remove the blade and check the spindle face and mating blade surface. Clean the spindle face with a fine-grain metal file or 120 grit sand paper block. Don't remove metal, just dirt and chips. If the blade still wobbles after cleaning the spindle, mark the blade with a permanent marker so that it can be

checked the next time it's sharpened.

To check pivot-bearing alignment, set the indicator tip against the front section of each blade near the top. Depress the foot pedal to lower the saw blade slowly. If the dial indicator makes a sweeping change from top to bottom of the stroke, the rear pivot is not aligned with the blade spindle. This will cause S-curve cuts on wider mouldings and will make it difficult to make good corners. Contact the appropriate saw guru if you have that problem. A quality indicator is all that is required and should cost less than \$75 complete with magnetic base from Sears, J&L Industrial (MSC metalworking), Grainger, or Harbor Freight.



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Contributors to this column are industry members who have experience in production framing operations. If you have a tip of your own, please send it to Quick Tips, PFM Production, 207 Commercial Court, Morganville, NJ 07751.

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