

It's hip to be square

We tee off with three combination squares

by Art Waldal

IT PROBABLY WASN'T COOL IF YOU went to your high school prom with a "square." On the other hand, having a square with you in your workshop definitely is cool. And, in construction of all types, squares are important for just that: to ensure that things are square, or not.

This month, I look at three different squares: A-Square folding framing square 4516, OneDer Square by A&W In-Oh-Vations Inc., and the Starrett C-434-12-4R combination set.

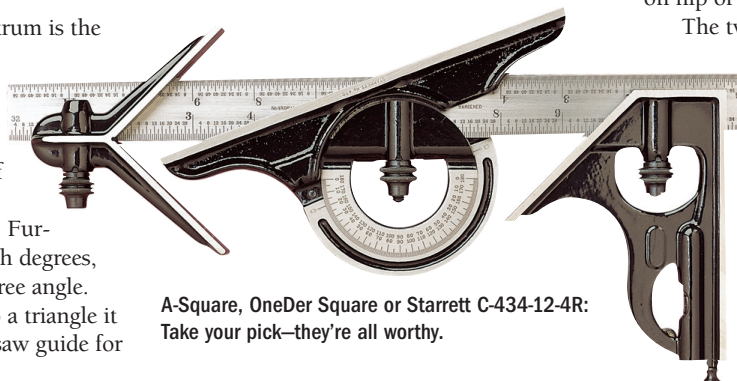
If you were rough framing a house, you'd use the A-Square or the OneDer Square. The Starrett unit, on the other hand, is designed for fine precision measuring and marking like those used in cabinet or metal work.

The Starrett comes with three attachments that slide onto a 12" blade: one for marking 45- and 90-degree lines, one for bisecting an outside angle at a 45-degree or finding the center of a round baluster end, and the third for precision measuring and marking any off angle. The leveling bubbles on two of the attachments give you a fairly accurate reading of level. Overall, this set is a fine precision piece of equipment.

On the other end of the spectrum is the A-Square. It consists of three pieces of $\frac{3}{16}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " aluminum flat bar with hinge pins and a 90-degree lock button. Sound simple? It is! Both sides of the square are stamped with tape measure increments of up to 16". Further, the angle bar is stamped with degrees, measured from the inside 90-degree angle. When folded out and locked into a triangle it can be used for a square cutting saw guide for



All three of these squares are very well-qualified for the job.



A-Square, OneDer Square or Starrett C-434-12-4R: Take your pick—they're all worthy.

wide stock up to 16" wide. Another neat thing is that it folds up to store easily.


A tool that isn't as precise as the Starrett, but isn't supposed to be, is the OneDer Square. The manufacturer gives you a 15-minute video on how to use it, but don't worry, it's not that complicated, it just has a lot of uses.

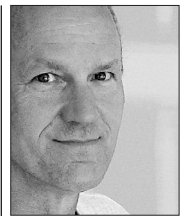
Great as a workstation saw guide with its fold out-of-the-way cut guide, it's also great for cutting I-joists; its 12" wide and the cut guide folds out of the way. It includes all the dimensions, angles, and rafter cut details of a good framing square.

The OneDer Square has raised the bar and located holes in the virtually indestructible polypropylene frame. What are the holes for, you ask? Just drop a 16-penny nail in the appropriate hole and easily make plumb cuts on hip or common rafters.

The two inset leveling bubbles are quite accurate, so you can quickly check pitches on old work. And you southpaws won't be left out: This thing works right and left-handed.

All three of these squares are very well-qualified for the job you put them to. Remember when life was a lot harder in the good old days before we had all these neat options? Ain't life great?

Until next time... 



Our tools are tested by Art Waldal, a custom homebuilder in the Vancouver, Wash., area who's been building houses for 24 years. Comment on his tests by e-mailing letters@buildernewsmag.com or calling our feedback line at (800) 401-0696.