

# Renovation Psychology® Advice for the Home Team Toolbox



*Dear Dr. Debi,  
We are so tempted by all the great tools we see when we go to the store. All we have is the bunch of hand tools my Dad left us. They are solid, but the new stuff looks so easy to use.*

*Signed, Badly Tempted*

Dear Tempted,

There are many real reasons that people have switched over to power tool usage over the years. Yes, it may seem expensive at first, but as you consider the amount of time it saves, it can be an important factor in the savings on your project. Yet up to a point – and you might be surprised at which items are cost effective for you.

A case in point, at one time, we were capping a basement. My notion was that it would go quickly because each child could use a hammer and we would easily nail down all the plywood to the joists in one lovely sunny afternoon. As we set ourselves to the task, a neighbor who is a retired contractor stopped by and offered to sell us his compressor and nail gun. We waived him off, grinning, as we eagerly looked forward to the quality time spent on the project as a family. Well, as the light waned, we had only about 1/8<sup>th</sup> of it done and we just rolled over like a puppy! We realized that the children's lessons had been learned, of cooperation and endurance, but that we would get very behind our schedule if we stuck with the manual hammer plan. And as parents, we don't want to overdo the lessons and turn them to torture. So, we bought the nail gun and the entire job was indeed finished before lunch the next day. It was surprising to me that an expensive nail gun was cost effective, but indeed we used it all the way up to the roof, and saved much more in time over the project than it cost to purchase.

Yet there are important factors to consider when looking at the wonderful array of power tools. For the project you are doing, how many repetitions will be involved in your manual tool versus power option? If you could use a hand saw to cut the boards for your bookcase project, and that is the whole set of cuts for the season, you probably don't need a power saw. You might even go to a friend's house to make those few cuts. But if you will be doing many precise cuts, you may want to look at the great radial, miter, and chop saws that call your name in the hardware store. Ask lots of questions; describe the variety of tasks on your project. Ask the clerk to show you how it will work; walk yourself through the process while you are able to touch and handle the tool. A good clerk will direct you to the right tool, even if it is less expensive. Feel the tool, and notice if it fits you, and if you will feel safe when the power is on. Is there safety equipment that must be used? You may not feel comfortable with the required extras, so check it out before you commit to the tool.

It is great to do some scouting ahead alone, as well as shopping together for power tools. The more you learn, the better. Some lessons on the tool will be easier to absorb alone. You can think through your doubts, perhaps ask more detailed questions, if you aren't worried about someone waiting for you. But shopping together has great advantages too, since the other person is not as likely to get wrapped up in the sales fever. If you shop together, just follow two rules: 1. Don't buy that minute – go talk first, and 2. Ask each other questions that let you share your thinking together. If you do this, you will weigh the options carefully and with more information than if you had done it alone. That is using your Teamwork to an advantage!

Here's to your happy Home Team toolbox!

*Dr. Debi*

*Dr. Debi Warner is the Founder of Renovation Psychology® and author of **Putting the Home Team to Work**, available now online at [RenovationPsychology.com](http://RenovationPsychology.com). Dr. Debi provides advice for greater domestic harmony to folks who are renovating their home – for True Home Improvement. This column is offered for enjoyment and enhancement and is not intended to replace your personal medical care. Dr. Debi has a consultation practice, visiting home sites all over New England from her studio in Littleton, NH at the Tannery Marketplace. Photo by Bob Jenks, St. Johnsbury, Vt.  
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