

Hanging Tool Cabinet

A cabinet full of tools is physical evidence of a deep, ever-growing investment. If it's not the first project you build, it should come soon after.

This project is based on the "Shaker Hanging Cabinet" (page 16) minus the doors, the solid-wood back (this one is Baltic birch plywood, which doesn't expand with changes in humidity), the curved top and a shelf.

Before you start working with wood, you need to first work with cardboard. To decide how to best arrange your tools, draw a 19"-high x 16½"-wide rectangle on a piece of cardboard and arrange your tools until you find a good fit (Check out "Storing Your Tools" on page 28 for some ideas).

Choose wood for the sides, tops and bottoms that's no less than 9" wide and has straight grain.

Next, joint and plane your boards. We chose maple, but yellow birch works, too. Cut all your parts to size, except the back and stiles.

Now cut a ¾"-wide x ¼"-deep rabbet on the inside top and bottom of each side piece. Next, cut a ½"-wide x ¼"-deep rabbet on the long back edge of each side piece. Then cut a ½"-wide x ¼"-deep dado on each side piece for the shelf, located 6½" from the bottom.

Next, drill the tool holes in the shelf. For my chisels, I made a mark ⅝" in from the front edge of the shelf and, using a drill press and fence, bored six ⅜" holes with a Forstner bit. These holes allow my chisels to hang on the shelf's front lip without falling. You also can drill a matrix of holes two rows deep to hold hand tools if you like.

Sand the inside faces of your pieces and test the fit. Once you're happy, glue it up. Check for squareness before tightening the clamps. Once the glue has cured, add nails for extra strength.

Attach the face-frame stiles and rout the cove detail on the three edges of the outside top and bottom pieces. Glue and nail these pieces on.

Measure the opening for the plywood back, cut it to size and screw it in place with #8 x 1"-long screws. Don't use nails – with screws you can remove the back for finishing.

Read "Wipe-on Finishes" on page 30 for detailed instructions on finishing. Sand, scrape or plane everything before applying your finish. Once the finish has dried, attach a magnetic strip or blocks of wood to hold your tools.

For information on hanging this cabinet, read "Smart Ways to Hang Cabinets" on page 24. **WM**

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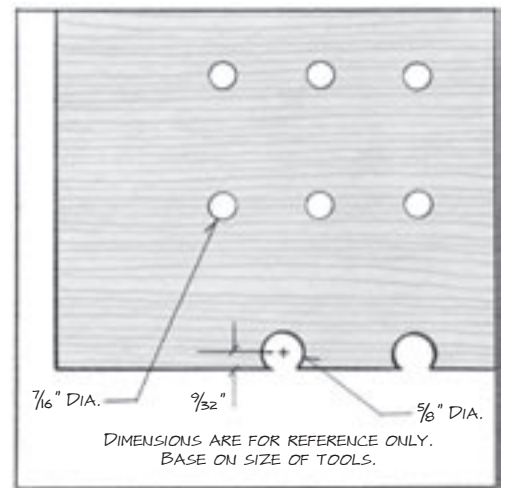
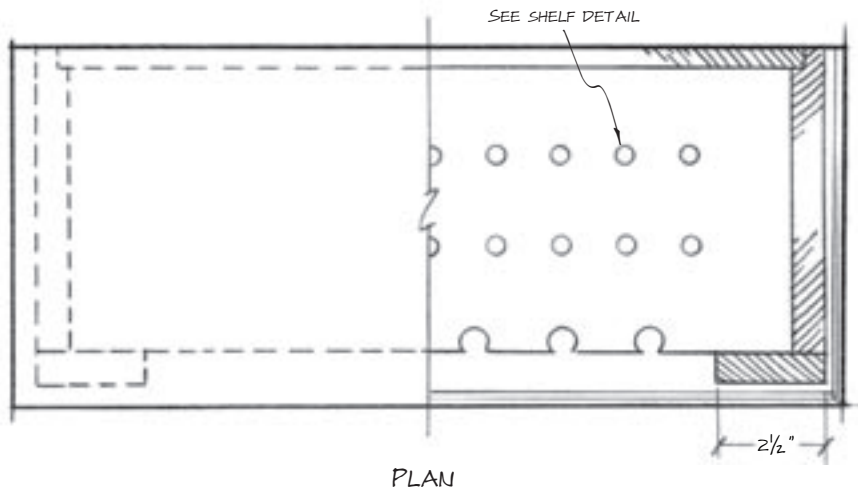


PHOTO BY AL PARRISH

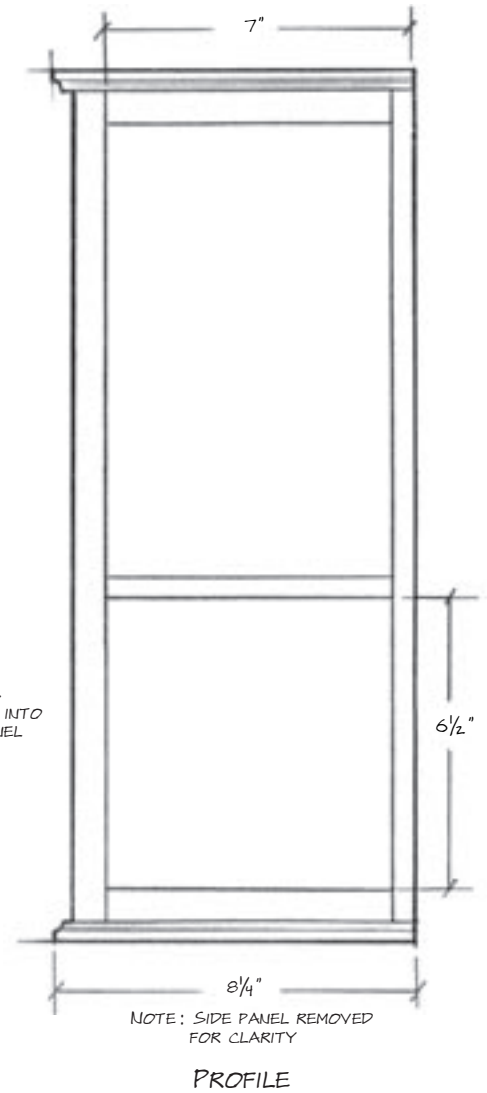
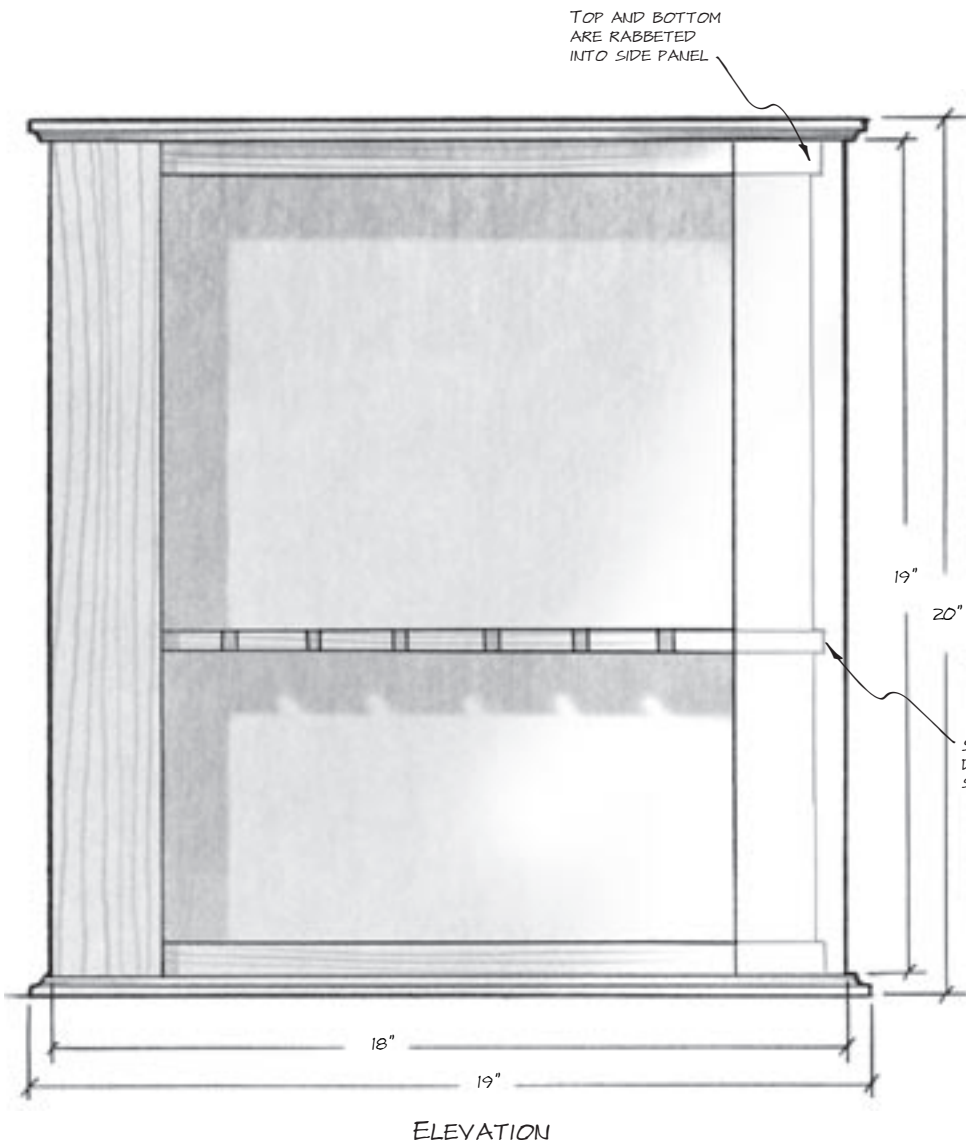
Story and project by Kara Gebhart, associate editor

Hanging Tool Cabinet

NO.	PART	SIZES (INCHES)			MATERIAL	NOTES
		T	W	L		
o 2	Sides	¾	7	19	Maple	¾"-wide x ¼"-deep rabbets on ends
o 2	Inside top & bottom	¾	6½	17	Maple	
o 1	Shelf	½	6½	17	Maple	In ½"-wide x ¼"-deep dados
o 2	Stiles	¾	2½	19	Maple	Glued to carcass
o 2	Outside top & bottom	½	8¼	19	Maple	
o 1	Back	½	17	19	Baltic birch	



SHELF DETAIL



HANGING TOOL CABINET

Storing Your Tools

There's a bit of romanticism associated with a tool cabinet. Many of us can remember sorting through our parent's old tool box, eyeing everything in it fondly or quizzically, then carefully putting each tool back in its place to avoid getting in trouble.

On page 26 we show you how to build a simple, utilitarian tool cabinet. Following is a list of clever tool-storage tricks. Hopefully this will give you ideas so you can design your tool cabinet to best suit your tool investment.

- Before you begin, use a piece of cardboard cut to the size of your cabinet to lay out your tools. Here you can play with organization to determine the best placement for shelves, cubbies and drawers.

- Rare-earth magnets, either buried in strips of wood or attached bare to the cabinet, are great for storing metal tools, but be careful. Magnetized screwdrivers can be very handy – even the tiniest of screws will cling right to them – but magnetized chisels and files can be

problematic. Swarf (the metal particles that are created during sharpening) will cling to a magnetized chisel, as will metal filings to files. These tiny bits of metal can scratch both the tool and your work, a disheartening experience.

- Appropriately sized holes or slots drilled or cut into wooden shelves can hold all sorts of tools including chisels, screwdrivers, router bits, drill bits, awls, files and pliers.

- Shelves are a great way to store hand planes. Contrary to what some people believe, storing a plane on its sole on a clean wooden surface won't dull the blade.

“The pioneers cleared the forests from Jamestown to the Mississippi with fewer tools than are stored in the typical modern garage.”

— unknown; attributed to Dwayne Laws



This tool cabinet, built by Malcolm and Glen Huey (owners of Malcolm Huey & Son, a custom woodworking shop in Middletown, Ohio) marries

hand-tool and power-tool storage with drawers, deep-set doors, magnetic strips, cubbies, brass hooks, Shaker pegs and Shaker boxes.

- Hand planes also can be hung. Drill a hole into the wall of your cabinet and tie a piece of leather string, forming a loop. The string's knot holds it in place. Put your plane's front knob in the loop. Whatever you do, don't drill a hole in the sole of the plane to hang it. This hole destroys any potential value the plane had to the next generation of collectors.

- A few appropriately sized and placed blocks of wood allow you to hang certain tools in your cabinet, such as the rule part of your combination square. Some people will even shape their blocks of wood to fit the inside of specific tool handles or the heads of hammers. This is for the ultra-organized only.

- Deep-set doors, such as those shown on the cabinet at left, give you additional storage space that you can use for a variety of tools.

- Store your precision instruments, such as straightedges, so they are completely flat and supported along their lengths. These instruments actually can be warped by their own weight. Dial calipers should be stored in their original plastic cases for the same reason.

- Avoid the standard pegboard hooks. Yes, they are inexpensive. But they fly off the pegboard if you just look at them wrong. Spend a few extra dollars on the pegboard hooks that lock in place. You will save yourself years of bending over to find the little things.

- If you're looking for the ultimate tool-storage technique, some people try "French fitting." This involves making different scroll-sawn depressions in the wood that will fit each tool precisely. But we don't recommend it. Spend your time on the projects you'll display proudly in your home.

- Although it's best to keep your safety glasses and ear protection in your shop apron or next to your machines, designating a drawer for safety equipment is a good way to keep extras on hand – great for when family members or friends visit your shop. **WM**

— Kara Gebhart



Inside your cardboard representation, draw where you will want to place the shelves, blocks of wood and magnetic strips for holding specific tools.