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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **MASONRY/EDGE TOOLS** |  | |  |  | | --- | | Trowel | | **T**here are different kinds and sizes of trowels. The blade should be made of forged steel to last longer. Handles are generally made of plastic or wood. Blades vary from 9 to 12 inches in length and 4 to 7 inches in width. The larger trowels are used for spreading mortar. A variety of smaller trowels are used repairing old mortar joints and scraping off excess mortar. A trowel that you London and Philadelpia Trowelsfeel comfortable with can be used to do all of the above, however, you will need a separate tool to finish the mortar joints.  **T**he two most popular trowels are called the Philadelphia trowel and the London trowel. | | Holding the Trowel | | **L**earning to hold the trowel correctly is important and will make the job easier. Gripping the handle with four fingers and putting the thumb on top of the metal band (ferrule) on the handle is how most masons hold a trowel. | | Loading the Trowel | | **T**he next step is learning how to load a trowel with mortar. Some people like to fill the trowel by cutting mortar from the top. Others will load the trowel with mortar by cutting from the front, and still others will load by cutting mortar from the side. Your comfort level will dictate your style. Once the trowel is loaded, you must settle the mortar on the trowel by snapping your wrist. This keeps the mortar from slipping off the trowel, especially when you are buttering head joints. The head joint is the joint that runs up and down the block. The bed joint is the one that runs along the top of the block. The bed joint is horizontal, the head joint is vertical.  **W**hen laying the mortar on the block, line the mortar side of the trowel on the side of the block where you want the mortar. In one quick motion, slide the trowel down, using the side of the block as a guide (the trowel should lightly scrape along the side of the block during your downward motion). | | Mason's Hammer | | **T**his tool is used for hammering nails and for splitting block or brick with the other end. One end is square and flat and is used like a hammer. The other Masons Hammerend is sharp, like a small chisel. The sharp chisel-end is used to make a cutting line around the masonry to be split. Light blows with the chisel-end all the way around the block or brick and then a sharp blow with the hammer end will give a clean cut. You might need to practice on a few pieces before it all comes together.  **T**he chisel-end is then used to take off any burrs or pieces which have not broken off cleanly. The mason's hammer can become dangerous if not properly used. Chips can fly off the masonry being cut and injure the face and eyes. ALWAYS USE GOGGLES WHEN SPLITTING MASONRY. | | Blocking Chisel | | **I**f there are more than just a few blocks or bricks that need to be split, and very clean cuts are required, then a blocking chisel should be used. This is a Blocking Chiselheavier, wider chisel, up to 8 inches wide. It comes in a variety of sizes and shapes. These chisels are made of steel and are used by holding the small end and striking the end with a heavy mashing hammer, mallet or sledge hammer. This will give a clean cut with usually just one blow. | | Mashing Hammer | | Mashing Hammer**A** mashing hammer is used to strike the chisel when cutting block. It is not recommended to use a mason's hammer to strike the chisel since the tempered steel might split and a piece fly off. A mashing hammer has two striking ends and will weigh from two to four pounds. | | Masonry Power Saw | | **I**f you are cutting large quantities of block or brick, you may want to use a masonry power saw. The two basic types of Mason using Masonry  Power Sawsaws are either hand-held or table saws. The hand-held saws usually have a silicon blade about 6 or 7" high and, therefore, will not give a clean cut all the way through an 8" block. But a hand-held saw is much quicker and gives a cleaner cut rather than working with a chisel and hammer.  **A** table-mounted saw with an electric motor is always used when there is a lot of cutting. Blades are normally 14 to 20" high and will cut through any kind of masonry block or brick, especially if the blade is made of industrial diamonds.   **A**ll masonry saws can be very dangerous. Safety goggles are a must and rings and jewelry should not be worn. The same is true for any loose-fitting clothing. If an industrial diamond blade is used, the blade must be cooled with water during cutting to keep the blade from shattering.  **A** dry cut can be made with a silicon-carbide blade, bonded with reinforced mesh. However, dry cutting throws out a lot of dust and a dust mask or respirator must be worn. | | Levels | | **N**ext to the trowel, the level is the second most important tool to have when building a wall. A good level is lightweight and absolutely straight. The better levels are called spirit levels because they contain alcohol in the vials instead of oil. Alcohol is more accurate.  Mason using Level**T**he purpose of the level is to keep the work you are doing plumb (even up and down, or vertically) and even straight across, or horizontally. A good level usually has 6 vials, two in the center, two at each end. The bubble must line up between the two red or black lines in order to be straight or level. If you lay more than one block at a time, you might want to get a level that is at least 36" long. Some levels are available up to 48", although mostly used by professional masons. Since most block is 16" long, you'll want a level between 18" and 24". | | Maon's Line | | **I**n order to have an easier time laying a straight wall, a mason's line is recommended. It is recommended that you use a nylon or dacron line, stretched between two corners (and anchored at the corners) of the wall you are building. By laying the line, you won't Mason Using Mason's Linehave to depend on your level as often, speeding up the job. A mason's line will let you build walls without bulges or hollows. A mason's line is placed very close to the block you are laying, but with enough room to still permit you to swipe off the excess mortar without disturbing the line. | | Steel Square | | **W**hen laying your wall, you'll want to make sure your corners are at a 90 degree angle, assuming you're building a square or rectangle wall. A large steel square, usually 24" long, Mason Using Steel Squareshould be used for marking off corners when laying out the job, and for checking corners as the wall is being built. If you are building a room, garage, etc., you'll also want to use a 12" square for checking window and door openings. If these openings are not square, the windows and door may not fit. | | Jointers | | **A** jointer is used to finish a mortar joint after it becomes hard enough so that a finger print will show in the mortar upon being pressed. Jointers come in many sizes and shapes, but typically, for blocks, you'll use a sled jointer to create a 3/8th inch joint for long horizontal joints. Vertical or head joints, which are only 8" high, use a smaller jointer. Jointers are shaped to give a variety of indentations, depending on your preference. The most popular are Joinerthe V joint and the half-rounded joint (concave joint). These two kinds of joints help shed water better than any other kind of joint.  **I**f you are using clay brick, or other brick products, you will want to use a jointer made specifically for brick. | | Chalk Line | | **A** chalk line comes in a metal or plastic case, with a cotton line coming out of one end. As the line is pulled out, it passesChalk Line through a fine chalk powder, usually blue or red. When this line is stretched between two points and snapped, it will leave an imprint on the surface being snapped. A chalk line is used for laying out a block wall on a concrete foundation to get the alignment correct. | | Brushes | | **A**fter a wall is built, there may be some mortar stains or powder residue on the wall. Before cleaning solutions are used, these marks can often be Brush for Cleaning Light Residue Off of Block Wallsbrushed off the surface. A variety of brushes are available. Powder residue can usually be brushed off with a medium soft bristle brush. A light accumulation of mortar could be brushed with a stiff bristle brush. If not,  an abrasive stone or piece of same block or brick after testing in an obscure area may do the job.  **S**tains that don't respond to brushing should be cleaned with a special solution and brushing with a stiff bristle brush. Watering the wall down before and after the wash and brushing is necessary so that the solution isn't absorbed into the wall before it can work. | |