



SHOP-TESTED RETRACTABLE CASTERS LIFT AND LOCK WITH EASE

Tester: Dave Stone

I've tried several types of casters for my tool stands and workbenches that were designed to flip up or swing away when not needed, leaving the stand sitting on its legs. Most proved clumsy or unreliable or lacked sufficient weight capacity. So I tried Smart Casters with skepticism.

These casters, though, work as advertised. Simply lift the end of the stand or workbench up 1" and each caster drops down and locks in place, holding the leg off the floor. Lift again, and the casters automatically retract into their housings as you set the leg back down. It's simple and worked every time. Each caster swivels and rolls easily over my moderately smooth shop floor. Capacity is 175 lbs per caster.

I was also pleasantly surprised with how easy the casters were to install. They come with square-drive screws and the long drill and driver bits needed to reach through the caster bracket during installation. I tried a set of four on a workbench, as well as a pair on a shop-built stand that has large wheels on one end but whose other end is too heavy to carry. Not anymore. Now it rolls easily with a simple lift but stays put when in use.

Retractable Caster, retractablecaster.com
Smart Caster no. R7, \$70 (set of four)

SHOP-TESTED ROUTER JIG CUTS DOVETAIL SLOTS FOR MATCHFIT CLAMPS

Tester: Dave Stone

I like MicroJig's MatchFit system of clamps that slide in dovetail slots cut into a worksurface. I haven't liked routing the grid of slots the system depends upon. It's a two-step process, requiring a straight bit to rout away most of the waste, then a dovetail bit to finalize each slot's shape.

The company's new router guide makes routing the grid easy. The guide comes with a base that holds your router, along with the 1/4" straight bit and 1/2"x14° dovetail bit required (both in 1/4" shank so they'll fit full-size or trim routers).

Using the jig proved easy. It centers the router automatically over the hole and secures it with a pair of onboard clamps. Install the straight bit, then make a pass with the long key on the underside of the jig base riding along the edge of your surface. Move the jig over, placing the key in the slot you just cut, and make another pass to cut a parallel slot 4" away. Then repeat. After completing your desired grid, swap to the dovetail bit and rout again, working from the opposite direction to ensure the key fits tight in each slot.

With this simple and foolproof system, I anticipate incorporating MatchFit clamping into many more worksurfaces and jigs

MicroJig, microjig.com
MatchFit Grid Router Guide Kit no. MFRG-400-025, \$99



SHOP-TESTED GRIPPY TRAYS GRAB SHARPENING STONES

Tester: Kerry Gibson

My sharpening stones don't reside in dedicated holders, so I used to rely on a pan and a piece of shelf liner to hold them in place and contain the water as I sharpened my chisels and irons.

Rockler's silicone sharpening trays make the process a whole lot easier. I was impressed with the heft and sturdiness of each 6x12" tray. The silicone is thick, and the raised center area, at 3x9", is large enough to support any stone I own. The deep well surrounding the raised area contains the water, so there's no mess. I appreciate that the trays, which are sold individually, lock together side by side, so I could line up my stones and work from grit to grit easily. You can also stack the trays or hang them for storage while allowing them to drip dry.

Rockler, rockler.com
Silicone Sharpening Stone Tray no. 74995, \$20

