

BASIC HAND TOOLS FOR KIT MODELLERS

There are only a few basic tools required to get started on your first kit. As you progress you will of course find the need for more and better tools. Most of these tools are reasonably priced and are within modest budgets. As you progress the items will get bigger and better as does the cost factor.

Also, the term “you get what you pay for” comes strongly into the equation. Good tools will last a lifetime and give good service. However as far as the basic “get you started” tools list is concerned there isn’t all that much. Not all of the tools listed below are vital and, in the case of multiple listings you may only need to choose one (i.e. it is not essential that have both a hobby knife and a scalpel).

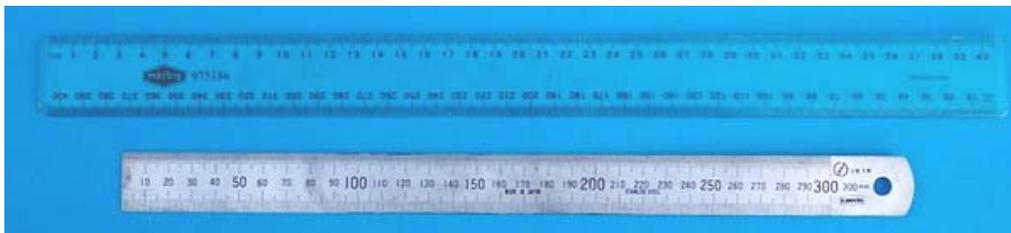
All of the tools are available at hardware stores, hobby shops, chemists or on e-Bay.

Note: Any brand names which are displayed on any of the pictured items are purely coincidental and are in no way a recommendation or endorsement of either the particular item or the brand name.

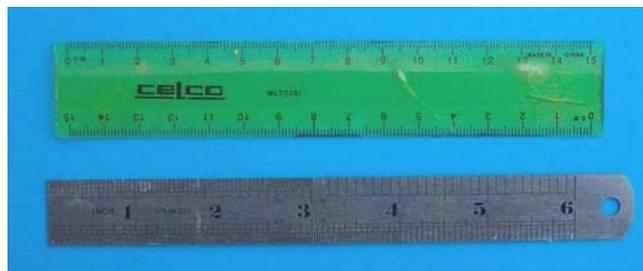
A small modelling hammer; essential if you intend to nail the hull planks. Many builders don’t use nails or use them only as temporary pinning before removing them.



300mm (12 inch) steel rule. Double measurements as some conversion from Imperial to metric will be necessary. Transparent plastic rulers are also handy to have.



150mm (6 inch) steel rule. Same as above.



Tweezers, big and small. You can never have enough of these.



Pliers; Like tweezers they useful for all types of jobs and because they're cheap it's easy to gather a large collection.



Lockable Forceps; essential for rigging and useful as a general clamp.



Needle files; another item which just seem to multiply. There are many shapes and sizes which are all used at some time but in truth the only ones from the collection below that get regular usage are the red handled ones.



Scissors and various cutters; most builders will eventually amass a large collection of these.



Hobby knives; make sure they have the metal collets; some have plastic collets which are inferior and dangerous. Scalpels are great for delicate work but take care when changing blades. Spare blades are available at model shops or on E-bay as a bulk item.



Box cutter with snap off blades; ideal for heavy duty cutting. Ensure that the blades are held firmly in the slide and the locking mechanism is reliable. Don't be fooled these are extremely sharp.



Safety Ruler; this ruler has a handle and is used for cutting planks length ways. The handle prevents you cutting the end of your fingers as can easily be done with an ordinary steel rule. Essential for safety.



Razor saw and additional blades. It's a good idea to store the blades with the teeth imbedded in a piece of scrap balsa wood for protection.



Small block plane used to plane plank edges.



Various shaped blocks of wood to make up sanding strips and blocks. As you can see the ones pictured have been well used and were made of off-cuts from under the work bench or the scrap bin. Various grades of sand paper. Coarse 30 grade to 400 W&D are available from all hardware stores.



Various small artist type paint brushes. Good quality brushes for painting and cheaper ones for spreading white glue etc. Available from hobby shops and artists' supplies stores.



A variety of plastic & metal clamps, even the humble clothes peg is useful on occasions. These types of clamps are cheap and necessary so when the opportunity arises, buy lots.



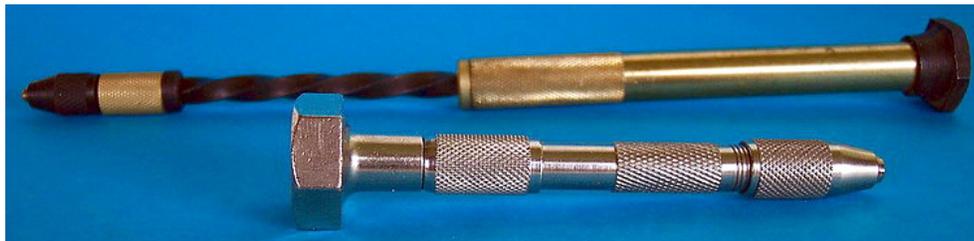
Even more clamps. The number of different shape and size clamps is enormous and at some stage all of the pictured clamps have been used.



Glues; CA slow set for timber work, CA fast set for rigging. Carpenters glue, white or yellow for wood working. Watered down carpenters glue 50-50 can be used for rigging work in place of the fast set CA. The different brands of glue are almost endless and most builders have personal preferences.



Micro drill set and pin vice; these drill bits are essential when it comes to drilling pilot holes for a number of items such as nails, dead eyes etc. The collets on the pin vice must close down to zero.



Engraver, 12 volt DC. All engravers must have zero collets for use with micro drills. Collets for this machine range from 0 to about 3mm capability. It is light and easy to handle. It offers fingertip control so there is no need to have it running before placing onto the job. The quick fingertip turnoff is a plus in the event of a problem. These engravers can be used with a variable speed controller such as a model train speed control. Train speed controllers usually have forward and reverse a very handy feature for power carving. Engravers can be used for sanding, cutting, grinding, carving etc. All 12 volt DC tools require an adaptor pack.



Home handy man drill bits. A set of bits which increase in size by 0.5mm increments is best. The two wood bits pictured on the right are used to very carefully drill holes in the deck for the masts, the rubber collars are vital as depth gauges.



Aluminium angle plates for bulkhead / false keel assembly. Essential items for getting the bulkheads square to the false keel. These were cut from a single piece of 90° angle aluminium for a fraction of hobby store prices.



Machinists squares; a good way to ensure that the first bulkhead is absolutely true and if nothing else a good machinists square is needed to check that the angle of the aluminium squares is exactly 90 degrees.



Jewellers' snips for cutting brass sheet. Probably not essential for your first kit build but as the kits become more complex this type of tool becomes very useful.



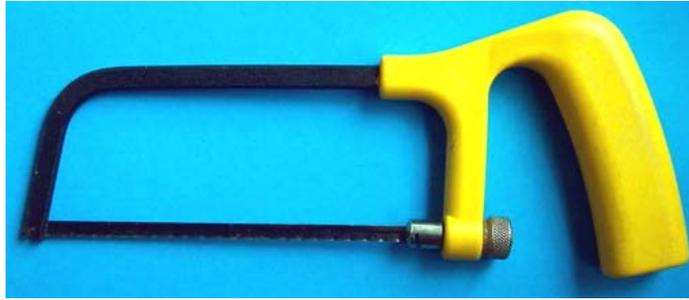
Dial or digital vernier callipers; essential for checking plank thickness and rigging diameter.



Wood snips; good for quick and accurate cutting of strip wood. Be careful not to damage the blade.



Mini hacksaw; a cheap and useful tool for cutting light metals.



Modellers vice; a good quality mini vice makes it much easier to hold small items, soft jaws will protect the work from being damaged.



Multi holder with magnifying glass; excellent for tying rigging knots which can be very tiring on the fingers and eyes.



This concludes the basic starter's kit, it is a general overview and certainly not all of the tools are in the "must have" or need "straight away" category. On many occasions you can and will get by with less but eventually you will be likely to need or want much of the above and more. For some people collecting tools becomes as much a passion as model building does.

****Written and prepared by; Dirk De Bakker (Kelvin12) & Greg Brooker (Southlander) for the exclusive use of the "Model Ship World" website.**