

## Weigh In!

Want to test a new tool or share a tool-related testimonial, gripe, or technique? Contact us at [jlctools@zondahome.com](mailto:jlctools@zondahome.com).



# TOOLS OF THE TRADE



## Compact Metal Connector Nailer

BY IAN SCHWANDT

**I am sure that I am** not the only carpenter with “fond” memories of being an apprentice and beating my fingers up while hand nailing joist hangers and hurricane clips. That said, positive placement metal connector (PP-MC) nail guns are still an unsung hero of the framing nail-gun category. With the bulk of my career being spent on interior finish and commercial jobsites, a PP-MC was never a tool that found its way to my kit, until I decided to build my own house.

Enter the new Paslode F150S-PP pneumatic nail gun. The metal-connector takeoff on my house numbers in excess of 200; at an average of eight nails per connector, that's a lot of nails and a lot of work. The Paslode F150S-PP shoots only 1 1/2-in. x .131-in. and 1 1/2-in. x .148-in. brite or mechanically galvanized nails, but this spec satisfied 90% of my connector fastening scope. For the remaining metal connectors, joist hangers on my deck, I used both screws and Paslode's F250S-PP nail gun, which shoots 2 1/2-in. x .162-in. nails as well as the 1 1/2-inch nails shot by the F150S-PP.

In addition to shooting into traditional framing lumber, we used the F150S-PP on LSL framing lumber, LVLs, and the new PT-LVL from PWT. From a power standpoint, the F150S-PP performed solidly, only occasionally requiring us to pull out a hammer to set a proud nail. Over a few weeks of testing, the gun never jammed and the new nose design gave all of the users, including my wife and father, confidence that the gun was placed correctly before pulling the trigger. My wife, who is no stranger to the jobsite, commented that the F150S-PP was the nail gun that she felt most comfortable using thanks to its balanced feel, which is the result of its light weight (6 lb. 4 oz.) and small size (11 5/8 inches across the head). Paslode does offer a magazine extension that increases the capacity from one clip of nails to two. While my gun wasn't equipped with this option, there were times I wished it had been, especially when I was nailing off hangers from scaffolding.

At about \$340, the F150S-PP and F250S-PP have similar price tags, and for some, that would make the bigger F250S-PP the obvious choice. However, if you are not a production framer or deck builder, the availability of other fastening options for the 2 1/2-inch metal-connector requirements of joist hangers, coupled with the light weight and well-balanced (yet powerful) specs of the 150S-PP, makes it a good option for remodelers, DIYers, and general contractors. [paslode.com](http://paslode.com)

*Ian Schwandt is the project developer for TDS Custom Construction in Madison, Wis., and is building his own high-performance house in Dodge County, Wis.*



With its compact one-strip magazine, the Paslode P150S-PP nailer fits easily between joists. The gun is designed to be used with 1 1/2-inch metal-connector nails, guided by a probe tip.

Photos: top, Ian Schwandt; bottom, courtesy JTW

# Battery-Powered Jobsite Power Supply

BY TIM UHLER

**Our jobsite** has changed so much in the past few years. In addition to completely switching from corded to cordless power tools, we recently started using a jobsite tablet for blueprints, email, safety documentation, and manufacturer spec sheets. All of us on the crew use smartphones and I record a lot of content for YouTube and Instagram, so we need to be able to easily and quickly charge and recharge our portable electronic devices on the jobsite.

Milwaukee recently released its M18 Top-Off 175-Watt Power Supply, which we've been using for two months. Is it worth spending \$100 on? Spoiler alert: I just bought one and will probably buy another one soon.

What makes this little glorified battery charger so great? Well, in addition to being superportable (it's powered by an M18 battery), it features a USB-C port, a USB-A port, and an AC 120-volt outlet. I can use all three

simultaneously if I need to. The 45-watt USB-C PD port is also superfast (my phone says "supercharging" when plugged into it). The charger works with all my M18 batteries and has a hook, so I can hang it off framing.

I have taken this little unit on camping trips to recharge portable lights, phones, Kindles, tablets, a GoPro, and a Sony A7III camera. I have even used it to power the Sony to shoot a class for the International Builders' Show on a jobsite. In addition, I can power my laptop with it. This is one of those products that makes sense for work and carries over to vacation and even power outages. [milwaukeetool.com](http://milwaukeetool.com)

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You can plug an M18 battery into Milwaukee's Top-Off power supply to recharge cellphones and other devices.



The Dalluge Da Bar is a tough nail puller with flat claws that can slip easily under trim without damaging it.

## A Better Nail Puller

**There is an art** to pulling nails. You know how I got so good at it? Yep, lots of practice. My first nail puller was the same one everyone else on my crew was using at the time, and it was so awful, it made me hate pulling nails with a passion. It was a major upgrade when we started using Shark's Japanese-style nail pullers, which worked well for us for many years. But about four years ago, I started breaking them. I think I went through three of them that year; previous to that, I had used the same one for a decade. Meanwhile, one of the guys on the crew tried the Dalluge Da Bar 12-inch nail puller and kept telling me to try it. Still, I was stubborn, and only bought my own to try out after I broke two more Shark bars.

It turned out to be simply the best nail puller I've ever used, and not only because it hasn't broken after more than two years of use. What makes it great is that this Japanese-made bar has thinner, flatter claws that get under the nail head with less gouging. I'm told that they're great for removing trim, but even pulling nails out of a joist hanger—while not fun—is much easier with this bar. We bought a few extra ones from the lumberyard for \$15 each, which feels like a pretty good deal. I realized recently that I think I use my hammer to strike this bar more often than I use it to drive nails. I'm not sure what that says about me as a framer ... actually, I do know: It means I make too many mistakes. [vaughanmfg.com](http://vaughanmfg.com) —T.U.

Photos: Tim Uhler