



Tool  
Test

# Folding Sawhorses

We put a stable of sawhorses through their paces

BY PATRICK McCOMBE

**L**ike every carpenter who's been at it long enough, I own or have tried several sets of commercially made sawhorses. I've also used homemade wooden horses quite a bit. The problem with site-built horses is that they're heavy and big. I just don't have the room in my truck or shop for a set of nonfolding horses, so when former editorial director Justin Fink asked me about my interest in testing commercially made sawhorses, I was intrigued.

When I started digging into what's available, I found a surprising number of different designs, weight ratings, and degrees of compactness. The lockdown in response to

the outbreak of COVID-19 brought a unique challenge to my test—since I couldn't go out shopping, I ordered the best-selling folding sawhorses on the Lowes, Home Depot, and Amazon websites. I ended up with 13 sawhorses, in two types of setups—fold-flat and fold-up. Both have their pros and cons, and which to use depends on what you're doing and your budget. In more than 20 years of testing tools, I can't think of a tool category with a greater diversity of products with such different features and attributes.

I was a little hesitant about this particular tool test because sawhorses are such a personal choice. Different users value different

attributes. I routinely use sawhorses for rips on panel products, so I need the ability to add sacrificial lumber to the top of the horse. I also prefer adjustable-leg models because they can be made taller than fixed-leg versions (which are usually around 32 in. tall). I tested each of the various setups the same way: I loaded them with PT lumber, set them up on soggy, uneven ground, and cut both sawn lumber and panel products. Prices and weight ratings are based on a pair of sawhorses, and all measurements are my own. □

Patrick McCombe is senior editor. Photos by the author, except where noted.

# FOLD-FLAT SAWHORSES

Fold-flat sawhorses are light, reasonably compact, and great for light-duty tasks like painting or trimming a door. They fold up easily and slim down to about 2 in., so you can tuck them into small spaces. The DeWalt and Ridgid models have adjustable steel legs, greatly increasing their utility and load rating. All the flat-fold horses I tested have plastic feet, so they won't mar wood or laminate floors or leave rust stains on concrete. Only Ridgid's Lumberjack has provisions for a sacrificial top.

## RIDGID LUMBERJACK

PRICE \$100 WEIGHT RATING 3000 lb.  
HEIGHT 31 in. to 39 in. LENGTH 28 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 16 lb.

This is the best fold-flat sawhorse I tested. My favorite feature is the replaceable 2x4 top rail that makes it easy to rip panel products and fasten jigs. I also like that you can clamp along its entire length and you can make the top larger by screwing another board on top. This horse also has the best shelf. It's sturdy, and small parts don't fall through. Another great feature is the leg adjustment—you don't have to pull a release to raise the legs; just step on the feet and pull the horse up and they extend. Lowering the horse is simple: The orange handles under the tray act as a release on each side. Combine these features and the weight capacity, and the Ridgid is an easy choice for Best Overall.



# FOLD-UP SAWHORSES

With one exception, fold-up sawhorses have legs that fold into or under the body of the horse. When folded, it makes for a very portable package. Unlike the fold-flat variety, which are mostly plastic, these horses are made of steel, so generally they're bigger, heavier, and have higher weight ratings than the fold-flat variety. Some have telescopic legs, and most can be used with clamps if you add a 2x6 or wider piece of sacrificial stock. The Trojan horses don't fit in their own housings—they don't have them—but they're practical, tough, and equally compact.



## TROJAN TS-35

PRICE \$165 WEIGHT RATING 4000 lb.  
HEIGHT 35 in. LENGTH determined by 2x top  
FOLDED DIMENSIONS 5 in. by 5 in. by 36 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 16 lb.

I've seen these horses on job sites for 25 years. Everyone I've met who's owned a set talks about their common-sense design, unsurpassed capacity, and durability measured in decades. They're also extremely portable when folded and their length is only limited by the length of 2x stock for the top. They're likely overkill for a hobbyist, but they're perfect for pros who want tough everyday horses that work without drama. Just make sure to work the spreaders with your foot or risk losing a finger. Even with the caveats, this is the sawhorse you won't break or outgrow.

# FOLD-FLAT SAWHORSES CONTINUED

## DEWALT DWST11031

**PRICE** \$80 **WEIGHT RATING** 2500 lb.  
**HEIGHT** 32 in. to 40 in. **LENGTH** 27 in.  
**WEIGHT PER HORSE** 14 lb.

This was my second favorite fold-flat sawhorse. It has adjustable steel legs and a sturdy shelf with only a pair of holes, so stuff is less likely to fall through. Like nearly all the other fold-flat sawhorses, you can't mount a sacrificial board to its top. And unfortunately, you have to squeeze the release and adjust each leg individually. I've had a set of these for several years. They work fine and have held up well.



## KOBALT 514691

**PRICE** \$40 **WEIGHT RATING** 1000 lb.  
**HEIGHT** 31 in. **LENGTH** 27 in.  
**WEIGHT PER HORSE** 6 lb.

The Kobalt and Stanley fold-flat sawhorses are nearly identical. The slope-sided design limits where you can use quick-adjusting bar clamps to the part of the top that overhangs the legs. Without adjustable legs, they are also too short for me to work at a comfortable height. Unfortunately, the two halves on one of the Kobalt horses were misaligned, so I couldn't get a 2x in the slots that are supposed to be made for them.

# FOLD-UP SAWHORSES CONTINUED



## BORA PORTAMATE SPEEDHORSE

**PRICE** \$160  
**WEIGHT RATING** 3000 lb.  
**HEIGHT** 31 in. **LENGTH** 45 in.  
**FOLDED DIMENSIONS:** 3x6x45 in.  
**WEIGHT PER HORSE** 19 lb.

The Speedhorse has "quick-deploy" technology—you pull a side-mounted catch with a couple fingers and the legs drop out of the body, which is pretty cool. The top is predrilled for a sacrificial board, and it has notches on both ends to receive 2x stock. The legs conveniently fold into the body in any order, but they're not height adjustable.



## DEWALT DWST11155

**PRICE** \$80  
**WEIGHT RATING** 2000 lb.  
**HEIGHT** 32 in. **LENGTH** 44 in.  
**FOLDED DIMENSIONS:** 5x5x44 in.  
**WEIGHT PER HORSE** 12 lb.

This is the sawhorse reinvented. Light and strong, the top is made from rectangular tubing. The design allows you to clamp almost anywhere along its length and a "V" on both ends allow you to hold pipe, tubing, and round stock. There are even latches on the ends for connecting the horses when folded, so you can carry a pair one-handed.



## EBCO SS-29

**PRICE** \$40  
**WEIGHT RATING** 2000 lb.  
**HEIGHT** 29 in. **LENGTH** 31 in.  
**FOLDED DIMENSIONS:** 7x6x31 in.  
**WEIGHT PER HORSE** 10 lb.

Made from galvanized sheet steel, the EbcO has edges sharp enough to warrant a warning sticker in two locations on every horse. It's a design I first used over 25 years ago and am happy to have abandoned. On the plus side, the top is predrilled for a sacrificial top, but the legs aren't height adjustable and the whole package is rickety.



## FORUP

**PRICE** \$50  
**WEIGHT RATING** 530 lb.  
**HEIGHT** 31 in. **LENGTH** 39 in.  
**FOLDED DIMENSIONS:** 3x4x39 in.  
**WEIGHT PER HORSE** 9 lb.

I was intrigued by these horses because of their super-small size when folded and their low price. Stay away—that's all they've got. If you try to slide them when they're open, the spreaders holding the legs are jostled out of place and the legs fold up as you're dragging. To add to the disappointment, some of the bolts were left loose at the factory.

## STANLEY 060864R

PRICE \$40 WEIGHT RATING 1000 lb.  
HEIGHT 31 in. LENGTH 27 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 6 lb.

Like the Kobalt sawhorse, Stanley's fold-flat horses are made entirely of plastic. I worried both would be flimsy, but each set held a large stack of wet pressure-treated lumber with no ill effects. Each horse has six hooks—four for hanging tools and two down-facing hooks for wrapping cords—but none are big enough to be of much use. My worm drive's handle doesn't fit over the tool hooks, for example.



## WORX WX065

PRICE \$70 WEIGHT RATING 1000 lb.  
HEIGHT 32 in. LENGTH 27 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 8 lb. (with clamp)

Sometimes things look better online than they do in person. The big selling point with these horses is the quick-adjusting bar clamp on the top rail. The two halves of the horse lock the clamps in place when you fully open the horse—which means they also fall off when you fold the horse. The clamps are flimsy and the mechanism gets bound when they're attached. Except for the clamps, these are similar to the Kobalt and Stanley horses, but cost \$30 more per pair.



## KOBALT 81330

PRICE \$80  
WEIGHT RATING 2200 lb.  
HEIGHT 26-32 in. LENGTH 42 in.  
FOLDED DIMENSIONS: 3x6x36 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 21 lb.

Remodeler Andrew Grace wrote about these horses in *FHB* #280. They have a predrilled top and height-adjustable legs, and notches on the ends receive 2x stock. They get smaller when folded than similarly designed horses in the test, but you have to fold the fully collapsed legs in the right order or they won't fit inside the housing.



## STANLEY STST11154

PRICE \$40  
WEIGHT RATING 1000 lb.  
HEIGHT 29 in. LENGTH 31 in.  
FOLDED DIMENSIONS: 4x4x31 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 6 lb.

If I were a carpenter traveling by mass transit, these are the sawhorses I would carry. They weigh less than any other in the test and have a minimalist design Krenov would approve of. The top is not pre-drilled and the short legs are not height-adjustable, but you can lock a pair together and carry them one-handed. But stay away if you're tough on gear.



## TOUGHBUILT C650

PRICE \$80  
WEIGHT RATING 2600 lb.  
HEIGHT 25-32 in. LENGTH 43 in.  
FOLDED DIMENSIONS: 4x6x43 in.  
WEIGHT PER HORSE 20 lb.

These are biggest and heaviest horses in the test. The top has notches on the ends that receive 2x stock and is predrilled for a sacrificial top. The telescopic legs adjust independently. You have to fold them into the housing in the right order, and two of the legs must be lowered, but the other two can be kept locked in at your preferred height.

## SHOW US YOUR STALLIONS

When preparing for this feature, I used the *FHB* podcast, social media, and [FineHomebuilding.com](http://FineHomebuilding.com) to ask for input on the best sawhorse features. We received so many homemade sawhorse designs, it was too much for one article, so we decided to cover those versions in the future. Magazine readers, we want to hear from you too—email some photos of your favorite shop- or site-built sawhorses to [fh@taunton.com](mailto:fh@taunton.com).  
—P.M.