



# 15 Tools That Every Homeowner Should Own

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With many first time buyers in their first home, one of the questions they may have is: “What and how many tools do I need for my first house? The following items are essential tools and a good start for the first timer. This list will be added to by you over the years as your skills improve and you want to save money on your projects. Feel free to ask your InterNACHI inspector about other tools that you might find useful.

**1. Plunger** - A clogged sink or toilet is one of the most common and disturbing problems that you will face as a home owner. With a plunger on hand, however, you can usually remedy these plumbing issues relatively quickly. It is best to have more than one plunger -- one for the sink and one for each toilet in the house.

**2. Combination Wrench Set** - One end of a combination wrench set is open and the other end is a closed loop. Nuts and bolts are manufactured in standard and metric sizes and because both varieties are widely used, so you’ll need both sets of wrenches. For the most control and leverage, always pull the wrench toward you, instead of pushing on it. Also, avoid over-tightening, especially when securing a toilet to the floor. You could crack the porcelain, which means at least one trip to the hardware store.

**3. Slip-Joint Pliers** - Use slip-joint pliers to grab hold of a nail, a nut, a bolt, and much more. These types of pliers are versatile because of the jaws, which feature both flat and curved areas for gripping many types of objects. There is also a built-in slip-joint, which allows the user to quickly adjust the jaw size to suit most tasks.

**4. Adjustable Wrench** - Adjustable wrenches are somewhat awkward to use and can damage a bolt or nut if they are not handled properly. However, adjustable wrenches are ideal for situations where you need two wrenches of the same size. Screw the jaws all the way closed to avoid damaging the bolt or nut.

**5. Caulking Gun** - Caulking is the process of sealing up cracks and gaps in various structures and certain types of piping. Caulking can provide noise mitigation and thermal insulation, and control water penetration. Caulk should be applied only to areas that are clean and dry. A great tip on using caulking guns is to use half of what you think you might need. Saves time, money and cleanup.

**6. Flashlight** - None of the tools in this list is of any use if you cannot visually inspect the situation. The problem, and solution, is apparent only with a good flashlight. A traditional two-battery flashlight is usually sufficient, as larger flashlights may be too unwieldy.

**7. Tape Measure** - Measuring house projects requires a tape measure, not a ruler or a yardstick. Tape measures come in many lengths, although 25 feet is best. Measure everything at least twice to ensure accuracy. Purchase the type that you can extend without the tape bending after a couple of feet. Makes measuring longer distance easier.

**8. Hacksaw** - These are great for cutting metal objects such as pipes, bolts and brackets. Hacksaws look thin and flimsy, but they'll easily cut through even the hardest of metals. Blades are replaceable, so focus your purchase on a quality hacksaw frame.

**9. Torpedo Level** - Only a level can be used to determine if something, such as a shelf, appliance or picture, is correctly oriented. The torpedo-style level is unique because it not only shows when an object is perfectly horizontal or vertical, but it also has a gauge that shows when an object is at a 45-degree angle. The bubble in viewfinder must be exactly in the middle, not merely close. Levels come in many sizes so buy the one you think you will use most often. Include a small level for leveling pictures and wall hangings

**10. Safety Glasses / Goggles – A must for safety!** For all tasks involving a hammer or a power tool, you should always wear safety glasses or goggles. They should also be worn while you mix chemicals. Add gloves to the mix if you are working around glass or wood.

**11. Claw Hammer** - A good hammer is one of the most important tools you can own. Use it to drive and remove nails, to pry wood loose from the house, and in combination with other tools. They come in a variety of sizes, although a 16-ounce hammer is the best all-purpose choice.

**12. Screwdriver Set** - It is best to have four screwdrivers: a small and large version of both a flat-head and a Phillips-head screwdriver. Electrical screwdrivers are sometimes convenient, but they're no substitute. Manual screwdrivers can reach into more places and they are less likely to damage the screw.

**13. Wire Cutters** - Wire cutters are pliers designed to cut wires and small nails. The "side-cutting" (unlike the stronger "end-cutting" style) style is handy, but not strong enough to cut small nails.

**14. Respirator / Safety Mask** - While paints and other coatings have become less toxic (and lead-free) over time, most still contain dangerous chemicals, which is why you should wear a mask to avoid accidentally getting them in your lungs. A mask should also be worn when working in dusty or dirty environments. Disposable masks usually come in packs of 10 and

should be thrown away after use. Full and half-face respirators can be used to prevent the inhalation of very fine particles that ordinary facemasks will not stop.

**15. Duct Tape** - This tape is extremely strong and adaptable. Originally, it was widely used to make temporary repairs to many types of military equipment. Today, it's one of the key items specified for home emergency kits because it is water-resistant and extremely sticky.