

JOINTER BUYING GUIDE



A jointer is a cornerstone machine in any woodworking shop, ensuring your boards are perfectly flat and edges are straight before glue-up or final assembly. Choosing the right size of jointer is critical — not just for the quality of your work, but also for how well it fits into your shop's workflow, space, and budget.

SIZE COMPARISON CHART

6" to 8"

Max width of cut: Up to 8"

- Hardwoods & some specialty types
- Picture frames & small cabinetry
- Cutting boards, toys, & small furniture

KEY FEATURES

- Benchtop or small footprint stationary floor model
- 1 to 1½ HP
- Primarily straight-knife & spiral cutterheads

PROS

- Convenient portability/mobility
- Affordable entry-level option
- Occasional use

Ideal For: Hobbyists • Advanced DIYers



8" to 10"

Max. width of cut: Up to 10"

- Heavier hardwoods & most softwoods
- Furniture & cabinetry
- Wide panel glue-ups

KEY FEATURES

- Floor standing, heavier build
- 1½ to 3 HP
- Straight-knife, spiral, & helical cutterheads

PROS

- Better support for longer boards
- Highly accurate table adjustments
- Pro shop use all day

Ideal For: Small Shops • Pros



12"+

Max. width of cut: 12" and higher

- Hardwoods, softwoods, & exotics
- Custom millwork
- Tables & wide slabs

KEY FEATURES

- Industrial construction
- 3 to 5 HP
- Straight-knife, spiral, helical & v-helical cutterheads

PROS

- Precision for wide stock
- Long-term durability
- All day, everyday use

Ideal For: Large-Scale Production



BEFORE PURCHASING A JOINTER, CONSIDER:

- **Cutterhead Type:** Jointers come with a variety of cutterheads, from the entry-level straight-knife to the advanced helical with carbide inserts.
- **Horsepower:** The higher the HP, the higher the torque, for more efficient jointing of wide boards and hardwoods.
- **Bed Style:** Parallellogram beds allow for easy, accurate adjustments and dovetail beds provide consistent long-term results.
- **Bed Length:** Longer beds provide greater support for large workpieces, with increased flattening and straightening accuracy.
- **Material Type:** Different jointers are better suited to certain wood varieties, depending on the cutterhead installed (see cutterhead section below for more details).
- **Mobility:** Small shops benefit from mobile machines, while larger stationary models are a good fit for larger/production shops that have more space.

FEATURE HIGHLIGHT: CUTTERHEADS

Straight-knife cutterheads are budget-friendly, while spiral or helical cutterheads offer quieter, smoother performance. Their quick changeout inserts save time and help prevent dust collection clogs for a cleaner shop and better workflow.



STRAIGHT-KNIFE

- Simple, affordable, and effective
- Use with softwoods and straight grains
- HSS - High-speed steel



SPIRAL

- Spiral self-seating carbide inserts sit parallel for smooth cuts
- Great for hardwoods



HELICAL

- Skewed self-seating carbide inserts create a superior finish
- Best for figured hardwoods and exotics



V-HELICAL

- Shearing cuts with self-seating, angled carbide inserts
- Tearout-free finishes

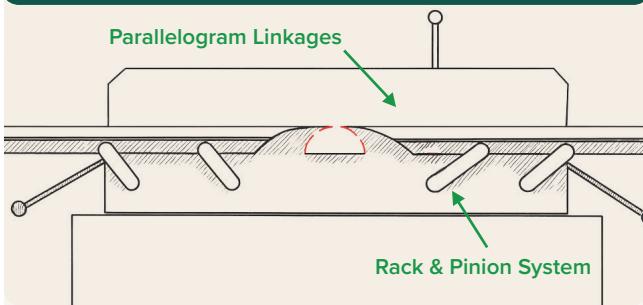
ADDITIONAL BUYING CONSIDERATIONS

Horsepower

- ▶ **6" to 8":** 1 to 1½ HP for completing light to moderate cuts in hardwood and softwoods.
- ▶ **8" to 10":** 1½ to 3 HP maintains cutterhead speed during deep cuts.
- ▶ **12" +:** 3 to 5 HP for heavy stock removal and consistent feed rates with continuous use.

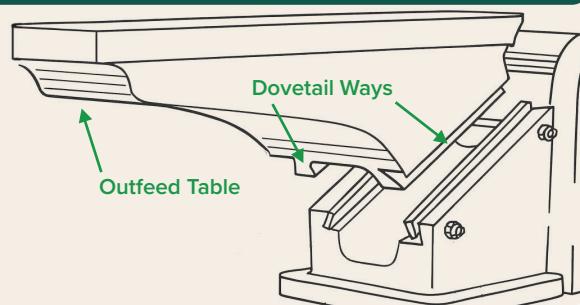
Bed Style

PARALLELOGRAM



- Allows easy, precise parallel bed adjustment.
- Preferred for professional use.

DOVETAIL WAYS



- Can require more effort to adjust tables up/down.
- More affordable.

Bed Length

- ▶ **Short beds (~30"-50"):** More compact and easier to store but less effective for jointing long stock.
- ▶ **Long beds (~60"-99"+):** Provide better support for large workpieces and greater flattening and straightening accuracy.

Material Type

- ▶ Consider the wood varieties you plan to work with before selecting a jointer.
- ▶ Check the jointer's cutterhead type to determine which model will work best with your planned projects.

Mobility

- ▶ Available shop space and use frequency will help you determine the right jointer.
- ▶ Some models have built-in mobile bases, or they can be added to make even large models easy to position.

Dust Collection



Benchtop jointers:

Feature 2½" dust ports or 4" adaptable ports that are compatible with standard shop vacuums.



Larger jointers:

Most other jointers offer 4" ports; some larger models include 6" ports to ensure efficient collection of high chip volume.

Workflow Fit



Small shops:

Consider a jointer/planer combo to save space.



High-production shops:

Dedicated machines increase productivity and reduce downtime.

EXTRA FEATURES TO LOOK FOR



Positive fence stops for quick setup of common angles.



Ergonomic controls and safety features.



Heavy-duty, center-mounted fences with full adjustability.



Easy to adjust infeed tables for quick depth-of-cut changes.