

Basic Tool Kit

Miniaturist's Tool Kit

These basic tools are useful for working with all types of dollhouse miniatures. They make a good set of portable tools to take to club nights and workshops.

Some of these tools may already be in your basic household tool kit and can be used as needed for miniature or dolls house work. Before you buy tools, check magazines, clubs and shops which deal with your miniature hobby and choose sizes which are appropriate for your interest. Many of these tools are used by most miniaturists, regardless of whether they are working on model cars, railways, dollhouses or some other project. Buy them as needed.

The type of box most people find useful is a heavy plastic tackle box with a lift out tray or drawer. Very reasonable at Canadian Tire. Another option (thanks Sunni and Joanne) are these zippered envelopes from the dollar store. They will hold most of your tools separated by category and can be clipped together with binder rings.



Tools From Your Household Supplies

- Toothpicks
- Straight pins and needles
- Craft sticks/frozen treat sticks You can usually buy packs of 'popsicle' sticks and coffee stir stick at the \$ store
- Paper towels/rags/baby wipes for quick clean-ups
- Masking tape
- Wax paper
- Scissors:
 - Manicure scissors
 - a sharp pair for fabric and leather & an equally sharp pair for everything else
- Water/paint containers (small empty yoghurt cartons etc.)
- Pen and Notebook

- Mechanical pencil: This has a very fine lead that is good for marking cutting lines. You can sometimes find packs of these at the \$ store.
- Emery boards are great for sanding. You can get a good sized pack at the \$ store.

Hobby Knife/X-Acto Knife

Essential for cutting all types of thin materials, thin wood, styrofoam, plasticard, cardboard. Replacement blades come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes and are sold separately. The most useful is a straight edge blade #11. Make sure you choose a handle which fits comfortably in your hand. Some are available with retractable blades. Available from hobby shops, craft shops and online – sometimes available at the \$ store.

Glue

Weldbond (available in any hardware store) works for just about any application.

Aleene's Tacky glue and Crafter's Pick Ultimate glue are very popular

Super Glue: Loctite Gel Control is good – available at Canadian Tire and Staples.

If you're putting together Chrysnbon kits, you may want to have Testors cement for plastic models although you can use Super Glue.

Pliers

Fine needle nose pliers are useful for holding things, bending wire etc. Choose smooth jawed pliers if you can find them, serrated jaws leave marks on plastic, wood and paper which are hard to remove. Available from hobby and craft stores, hardware stores, electronics shops.

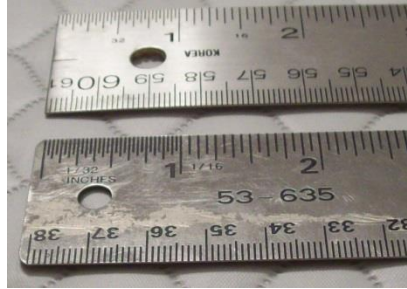
Self Healing Cutting Mat

Used as a protective surface to avoid work surface knife cuts. These come in two varieties, it is handy to have both:

- **Gridded green or blue cutting mats** - found at hobby shops, art suppliers, craft shops, quilting stores. Choose one in a size you can fit in a *take to shows/clubs kit*. These have a self healing surface good for craft knives. The surface will close over cuts and not affect the mat. Do not saw or drill items on the mat, this will create holes that won't heal.
- **Kitchen counter cutting mats** - thin transparent flexible plastic mats to place on a kitchen counter. These are often found in bargain/dollar stores, hardware stores, kitchen supply stores. They are great as a protective cover for a work surface or table while you work.

Steel Ruler

Used as a straight edge for knife cuts as well as for measuring. Choose one with imperial (inches) and metric (cm) measurements. For a start, get a 12 inch/30cm rule. Later add a smaller 6 inch/15cm. length. Ideally, you want one where the measurements begin at the end of the ruler, not offset



Like the upper one, not the lower.

Available from hobby stores, craft stores, art supply and stationery stores. Choose one with a cork base if possible as it will not slide on the surface when you are cutting against it.

Clamps - a selection of pegs, bulldog clamps and rubber bands can be adapted to do almost any job. These are handy:



The top clamps are from the hardware store, the middle one from Canadian Tire and the bottom one from Dollarama.

Wire Cutters

Utility Knife

Used for cutting dense materials, wood, foam, carpet. My favourite is the Mastercraft folding utility knife from Canadian Tire. Replaceable blades.



Regular \$9.99 goes on sale regularly - sometimes as low as \$3.99

Tweezers

Any pair of tweezers will do to start. After you begin to specialize, you may find you want more specific tweezers. Fine [bent nose tweezers](#) with non serrated jaws are the most useful as you can use them to reach into awkward spaces. Non serrated jaws keep the tweezers from marking soft materials. Some miniaturists also like using very fine modelling or electronics tweezers. Available from cosmetics departments, hobby stores, craft stores, electronics suppliers.

- **Pair Cheap Surgical Gloves**- for preventing fingers being covered with stain
- **A handful of Lego Blocks** - perfect plastic right angles which glue will not stick to
- **Double Sided Tape** - good for holding thing in place. Double sided carpet tape can be used for laying floors and hanging wallpaper, especially if you have glued your flooring or wallpaper to a card stock or matboard template.
- **Wood stain** – There are lots of possibilities but to start, the quickest and cheapest is the Furniture Touch-Up Set of markers from Dollarama for \$1.25



- **Brushes:** 1 inch foam paint brush (for glue and painting larger surfaces)
 - a selection of different sizes
 - buy the best quality you can and take good care of them
- **Credit cards that come in the mail or unactivated gift cards:** great for spreading glue.
- **Needle Tool:** modelling polymer clay, starting holes for drilling, making bows, etc.



You can make your own by drilling a hole in the end of a dowel (the wooden handle of a worn-out foam paint brush works well) and gluing in a darning needle eye first.

- **Stylus:** Various sizes for scoring paper and shaping paper for flowers.



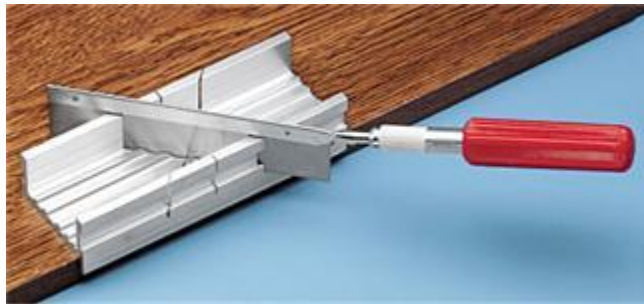
For scoring, you can also use the tip of an empty ball point pen or, carefully, the back edge of the blade in your X-Acto knife.

- **Computer, Colour Printer, paper and cardstock** – With these you can make an incredible number of miniatures. (I have seen whole rooms done with just these items.) You may think of printable miniatures (printies) in terms of simple things like pictures, posters and books but there are sources of printies to make such things as furniture and appliances!

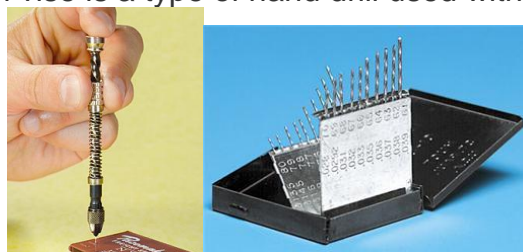
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Depending what work you're doing, eventually you may want to add the following:

Mitre Box and Saw – Used for cutting baseboards and moldings, making picture frames.



Pin Vise and Bits – a pin vise is a type of hand drill used with very small drill bits



Mitre Cutter a hand held tool for cutting wood, especially at angles



The one on the left is made by Midwest Products. (I bought mine from Luba Barnes in Spruce Grove.) It's the smallest of three variations that they make.

<http://www.midwestproducts.com/store/products/dcbda56f-b189-40e2-8bdb-5f1a5f76e0db/1/Cutters.aspx> The one on the right is available from Lee Valley
<http://www.leevalley.com/en/wood/page.aspx?cat=1,51220,51222&p=32192>

Needle Files: Handy for shaping wood, plastic and metal. Available at most hardware stores, probably cheapest at Princess Auto.



L Square: Handle to have to check that your building, etc., is on the square.



Sandpaper: At some point, emery boards won't be enough and you'll want sandpaper with a grit count of 220 – 400.

Task Lights for Miniatures

Small folding portable natural fluorescent lights are useful at club and show workshops and as task lighting at your main miniature work site. A larger, natural daylight lamp is

essential if your work involves working with color. Portable, table and floor models are available online or through hobby, needlework, and art stores. <http://www.ottlite.com/> These are occasionally available at Costco at a very good price.

Locally, items such as the mitre box and saw, the pin vise, and many other tools are available at:

Hobby Wholesale Inc.

6136-Gateway Blvd

Edmonton, T6H 2H8

Canada

(877) 363-3648 (780) 434-3648

Fax: 780 434 3660

<http://www.hobbywholesale.com>

info@hobbywholesale.com

Princess Auto <http://www.princessauto.com> is also a good source for many tools at very good prices: **Edmonton North**

11150 163rd Street NW

Edmonton, Alberta

T5M3R5

780 483-0244

Edmonton South

9835 34th Avenue NW

Edmonton, Alberta

T6E5X9

780 481-2315