

Tools

If you do any kind of woodworking, you probably already have most of the tools you need. This list is everything I've accumulated over the years. You don't need all of it, and certainly not all at once. I highlight which items are most important.

Workmate: or comparable vise-top, portable workbench. Highly recommended. A Workmate is worth its weight in gold when disassembling pallets, gluing staves together, sanding, and as a place to put pieces of wood as you work on your drum.

Clamps: Especially quick-release bar clamps and ratchet strap clamps.

Reciprocating Saw: Highly recommended. This is the easiest way to disassemble wooden pallets. You can either use a metal blade to cut through the nails or a wood blade to cut the wood away from the frame.

Pry Bar (a.k.a. Crowbar): Essential. If you don't have a reciprocating saw, use this tool to pry the wood away from the frame. The nails are twisted, like screws, so you need a heavy-duty pry bar to open a gap for the wrecking bar. A lot of pallet wood is old and, especially at the ends, splits easily. You have to take care when prying the boards loose.



Figure 1. Crowbar or pry bar.

2' Wrecking Bar: Essential. Once you can see the ends of the nails, this is what you use to pull them out. A 2' bar is minimum length; the longer the better.



Figure 2. Wrecking bar.

Small Sledge Hammer: Essential. You can't use a plain claw-hammer to beat the pry bar and wrecking bar. You need something heavier. A 2-pound sledge with a 12" handle is about right.

Nail Punch: If you use the reciprocating saw to cut off the nails, you'll need a nail punch to expose the head so you can pull it out.

Table Saw: Highly recommended. A good 7" - 7½" saw will work, but a 10" is better for two reasons: You're going to rip (cut lengthwise)