

Tool Time with Chuck

There's No Time Like Hammer Time!

At first when my Brother-in-law called me a tool, I thought it was a compliment of my mechanical prowess and vast array of power tools. As it turns out, that comment wasn't meant to reflect my handiness with a wrench. Who would 'a thought!

In response to his remarks, I have decided to help him "fix" his car, with my new favorite tool, The 10# Sledge Hammer. Actually, I started testing with some smaller hammers, which you will also find reviewed in this article.

Tack Hammer: When you want to really "fix" someone or something, the Tack Hammer is a goldfish in a world of barracuda. Worthless. The Tack Hammer is very small and light weight, allowing you to swing it easily and at a great rate of speed. Unfortunately, due to its low mass, it really doesn't "fix" very much beyond driving a nail into drywall. When used against my Brother-in-law's fender, it would just bounce off, barely making a mark. If I had an unlimited amount of time for "fixing", the Tack Hammer might work, but it doesn't provide much "bang for the buck" and is generally unsatisfying to wield. Pass this one by.

Ball Peen Hammer: This is at least two steps up the food chain from the tiny Tack Hammer. The Ball Peen Hammer has a decent sized iron head that is rounded on one end. It's perfect for shaping metal panels and generally "fixing" the crap out of things. If I were in a big hurry, this would be the hammer for me, due to the speed at which you can deliver repeated blows. That speed can be attributed to the compact, aerodynamic head that slices through the air with ease. The down side is that it is relatively small, so each blow doesn't offer as much "fixing" as you may wish for.

5# Sledge Hammer: The 5# sledge may be considered the "SUV" of hammers. It goes about anywhere, but isn't particularly well suited for anything. When you look at a 5# Sledge, it looks like it means business - a big chunk of iron at the end of a big 3 foot stick. The problem is, for small "fixing" jobs, it's way too big and it doesn't quite have the heft for a big "fixing" job. Also, if you need to move fast, the 5 Pounder is a little too massive to be carried easily.

10# Sledge Hammer: The Grand-daddy of fixing equipment. Short of a D9 Caterpillar or hydraulic jack hammer, this hammer will fix what ails you. It doesn't have the speed and agility of a Ball Peen or even the 5# Sledge, but that deficiency is overwhelmed by sheer fixing power. When you swing a 10# Sledge over your shoulder, you can feel the gravity of the entire earth helping you make an impression on your target. It's a thing of beauty to behold. Each swing of a 10 Pounder will give you the satisfying thud of crushed metal and broken glass. The only down side of a 10# Sledge is its massive size and weight. Don't use this hammer when you are in a hurry - it's just not as portable as the smaller hammers.

If I have flexibility in choosing "fixing" gear, I carry a Ball Peen and a 10# Sledge together. The Ball Peen is perfect for a "quick fix" where speed is of the essence, with the 10 Pounder as a back-up in case you get into a spot where you need high "fixing power". Don't bother with the Tack Hammer, as it just doesn't have the mass to do anything useful in the fixing department. I really don't like the 5# Sledge because it's an awkward in-between size.

On the Chuck's Tool Approval Scale, I give the 10# Sledge Hammer a score of "10". Its massive force and pure fixing ability overwhelm its bulkiness. Given a choice of just one hammer to fix a problem, it's the 10 Pounder every time.



Chuck tests two different hammers on a vehicle. (Note previous test results.)

