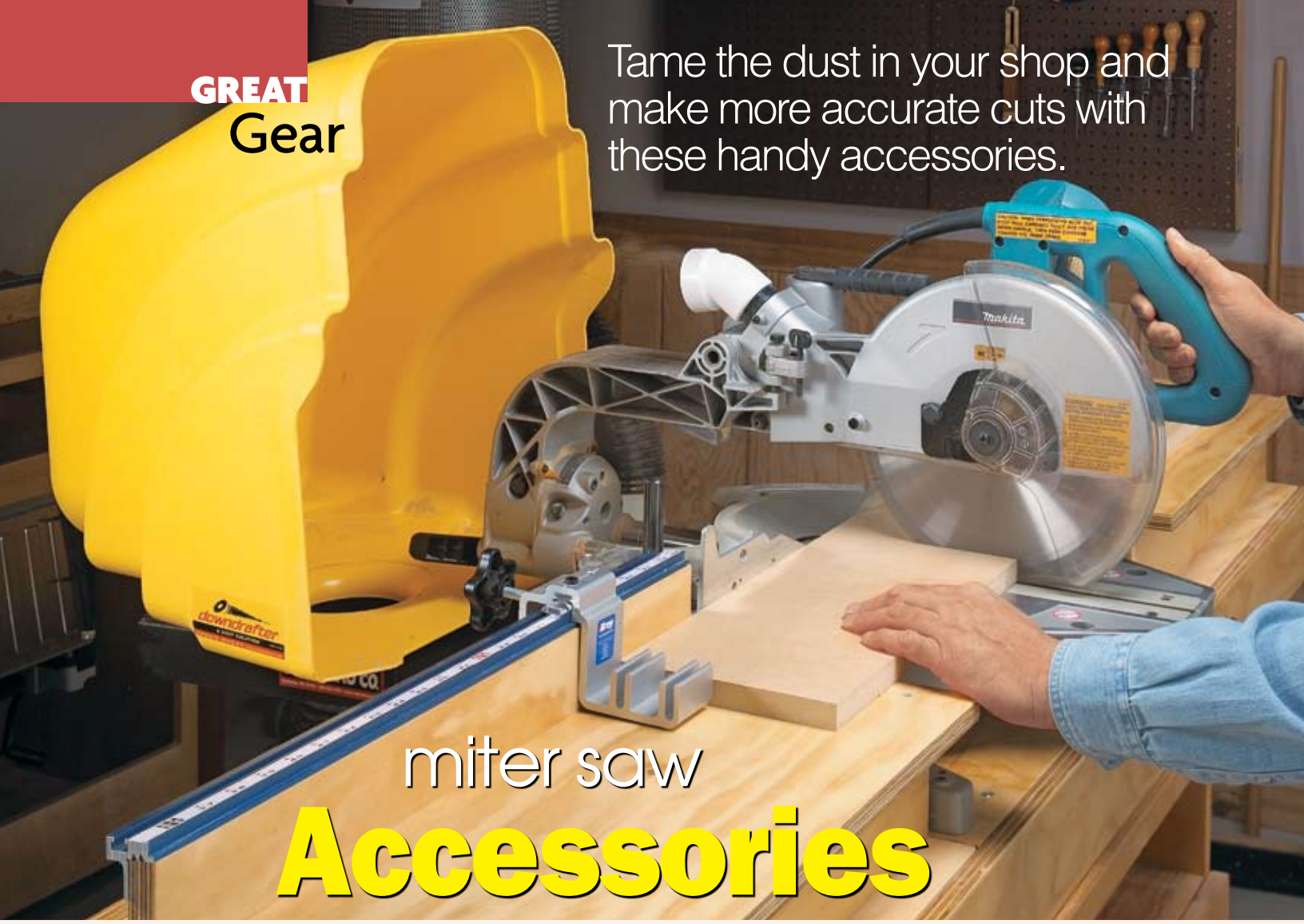
GREAT
Gear

Tame the dust in your shop and make more accurate cuts with these handy accessories.



miter saw Accessories

I don't think a day goes by in my shop that the miter saw doesn't get used. It's great for cutting pieces to length, making angled cuts, or trimming an extra "hair" off a workpiece to get a good fit. In short, it's a shop workhorse.

But the saw by itself is more suited to a construction site than a workshop. Thankfully, the accessories pictured above can make your miter saw more accurate, safer, and more enjoyable to use.

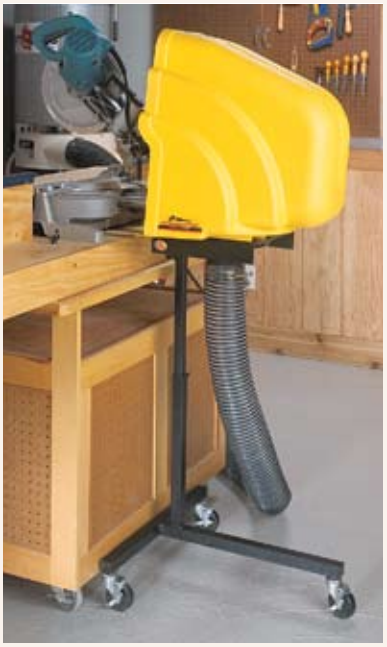
ROUSSEAU DOWNDRAFTER

When it comes to controlling the dust clouds produced at the miter saw, I've tried just about everything. Starting with connecting a vacuum hose to the saw's dust port, and moving on to building a box to try and corral the dust. The dust seemed to win every time. So when I saw the *Downdrafter*, I had to give it a try.

The *Downdrafter* is a dust collection hood made of impact-resistant molded plastic with a 4" dust collection port. Using the hood, your dust collector can handle even the worst dust clouds (like cutting MDF) without missing much.

Working the Angles. The problem with trying to collect dust at the miter saw is the fact that the dust exhaust changes position as you move the blade to make angled cuts. That means a fixed collection point won't do the job — especially when you angle the blade to cut at 45°. So a smart system would allow you to move the collection point with the blade. And that's exactly what the *Downdrafter* does.

Two Options. The *Downdrafter* hood is available in two models.



▲ ***Roll it to the Source.*** *Sturdy construction and portability add to the Downdrafter's strengths.*

The first, shown in the photo at right, is on wheels. This means you can position it and swivel the hood to match the angle of the saw to best capture the dust. It has the added advantage of being mobile, so you can move it away from the miter saw and use it near your workbench or when you're power sanding a bowl on the lathe.

Another model attaches to the miter saw on rails allowing the hood to move with the saw as you change angles. This option is great if your miter saw stays in a fixed location in your shop and you seldom need to move it to a job site.

Results. I found it to be very effective, with either a standard miter saw or a sliding-compound model. And the steel stand makes height adjustments easy while still providing a solid platform. You'll probably want to add a 45° PVC elbow to your saw's dust port, as shown in the main photo, to keep dust pointed into the hood. (The manufacturer recommends this modification in the instruction sheet included in the package.)

With a street price of $150, it's not the least expensive solution for dust control. But compared to covering your shop in a layer of dust and inhaling it as well, it just might be one of the most effective.

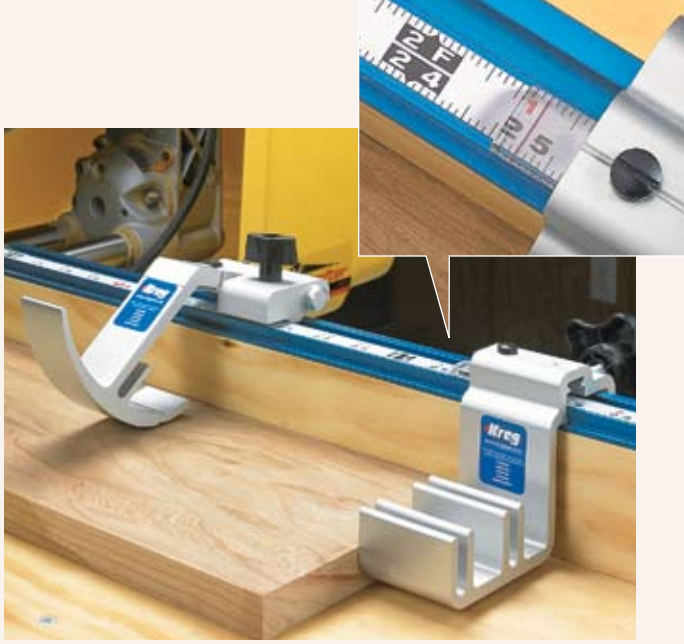
THE KREG PRECISION MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

A popular use for the miter saw is making accurate and repetitive length cuts. *Kreg* has made the job a lot easier and more accurate with their *Precision Measurement System*.

The kit consists of extruded aluminum T-track designed to fit over a ¾"-thick, shop-built fence. The track comes in four 2' lengths, so you can customize a setup for your needs. The kit also includes both left and right-reading measuring tapes that fit into the T-track.

Stop Blocks. But the highlights of the system are the two stop blocks. Both slide and lock into position easily on the T-track and feature acrylic etched cursors for setting up precise cuts using the fence.

The first block is square and fixes in position like a traditional stop block. The second is a "flip-stop." Once positioned, it can be flipped back over the fence and out of the way of the worksurface. Its curved shape also allows you to slide a board under it (as shown in the top photo at right). The real advantage here comes when you're cutting different-sized pieces from a board. (For example, if you need to cut multiple 60" and 30" pieces from a set of 8' boards.) You just slide the board against the flip stop, make the cut, then slide it underneath the stop to the fixed block and make the next cut (photo above).



▲ ***A Pair of Stops.*** *Both the flip-stop (left) and the fixed stop (right) feature an easy-to-read hairline cursor (inset above) for making accurate cuts.*

The price of the *Precision Measurement System* is also around $150. But the accuracy and time savings can quickly justify the cost.

Bottom Line. The *Downdrafter* and *Precision Measurement System* are welcome additions to the shop. And if you cut a lot of crown molding, the box below shows another handy upgrade. You can find out where to buy these accessories in Sources on page 51.

Accurate Cuts in Crown Molding

Benchdog Tools takes the hassle out of cutting crown molding with their *Crown-Cut* jig. The nice thing about the *Crown-Cut* is its simplicity. All you need to do is set the fence to hold the molding upside down and at the correct angle — no need to tilt the blade. The directions for inside/outside corners and left/right cuts are printed right on it to help you avoid errors. You just position the molding in the jig and then cut the miter.