

Quick -Change Torch Cart

Gary Houdek can push his propane/oxy torch kit around the shop floor or tow it to the field behind an ATV. Equipped with car wheels, the cart is just as stable either way, and adding the tongue for towing is fast and easy.

"The standard torch cart with its small wheels can be hard to move around a shop with cords and hoses on the floor," says Houdek. "With its larger wheels and balanced design, my cart is easy to move in the shop. When I add the tongue, it tips the tanks horizontal, and it is stable when towed over rough ground."

Houdek used mostly 1/4-in. steel for the cart, simply because that's what he had available. The cart frame is a combination of pipes, steel strap and rectangular tubing of various sizes.

The oxygen tank and propane tank are balanced within the cart's framework. Wheels and spindles attached to the lower supports were salvaged from a Chrysler Neon. Tabs on the platform help to secure the rear-mounted oxygen tank when it lies down in the towing position. An over-center, spring-loaded chain holds it in place in the vertical position. To change out a bottle, Houdek pulls a pin and flips the over-center latch back, releasing the chain.

When he wants to take the cart to the field or into the farmyard, Houdek connects the tongue assembly. The clevis hitch tongue is a length of 2 by 2-in. square tubing with an upper crossbar made from 1 by 2-in. channel iron. Two pair of clevis-style ears at either end of the crossbar slide over and get pinned to steel straps that run around either side of the oxygen tank. At the same time, two steel rods with stops on them attached by a crossbar to the end of the tongue, slide into 1 by 1 square tubing beside each wheel, further securing the cart to the tongue.

"When it is tipped into towing position, the tongue helps to lock the oxygen tank into position, while the propane tank above it adds weight for greater stability," explains Houdek.

Houdek added several items to make torch work easier, including a 50-ft. hose reel and a toolbox. Sleeves to hold the torch and rods to hang the striker and safety glasses are attached to each side of the cart.

"The reel can swing to either side for easy hose release," says Houdek. "It's my favorite part of the cart; it's so easy to access."

A spring-loaded T-bar in a slot on the reel hinge plate holds it in place. However, in the towing position, Houdek releases the reel and uses bungee cords to tie it down.

"The weight of a bouncing reel would be too much for the spring-loaded lock," says Houdek.

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Big car wheels and a balanced design make home-built torch cart easy to move around the shop. Note 50-ft. hose reel.



A spring-loaded, over-center chain holds oxygen tank in place in the vertical position.



Spring-loaded T-bar rides in a slot on hose reel hinge plate to hold reel in place.



Add-on tongue assembly lets Houdek tow cart to the field behind an ATV.

Handy "4-In-1 Tool" Built For New Holland Haybine

Edward Fett, Lennox, S. Dak., says the "4-in-1" tool he made for his New Holland 499 swing tongue haybine saves him a lot of time and trouble.

"It has 2 different size sockets, a punch, and a 16-in. long retractable handle that I use like a slide hammer to strike the punch. Extending the handle also increases the leverage when using the sockets," says Fett.

"I came up with the idea because whenever I needed to change broken mower sections in the field, I always had to bring three different tools with me—a wrench to remove the guards, a socket to remove the mower sections, and a punch and hammer to remove any sheared-off section bolts. I spent a lot of time walking back to my tractor to get the tool I needed. If I laid any of the tools down they could easily get lost in the hay, and then I spent even more time searching for them. Now I have one tool that can do all of those jobs."

The tool measures 18 in. long with the handle extended and 9 1/2 in. long retracted, small enough to fit into Fett's toolbox. To make the retractable handle, he bought a new sliding T-handle breaker bar and threw the handle away, keeping only the square socket drive. He then cut 5/8 ID bushing stock to the right length and welded one end shut. It hits a 5/8-in. dia. steel rod that rides inside the bushing, which is used to drive out section bolts.

Fett tapped a small hole in the middle of the rod and threaded a cap screw into it. He



Homemade 4-in-1 tool has 2 different size sockets, a punch, and a 16-in. long retractable handle that's used like a slide hammer to strike the punch.

also cut a long slot into the bushing, which the cap screw slides back and forth in.

He used a lathe to grind the top end of the rod down to form a punch.

To attach the sockets Fett removed the handle from a short 1/2-in. drive breaker bar, then welded a large socket on one end of the bar and a small stepped-down socket on the other end. The 5/8-in. rod runs through the short breaker bar in place of the handle. A roll pin, inserted into a hole drilled into the rod, keeps the welded-on sockets in place.

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2-Post Lift Used As Workbench

"I work on commercial grade push mowers, sod cutters, rear tine rototillers, generators, and so forth that are too heavy to lift by myself onto a work bench. It's uncomfortable to work on these machines while kneeling or laying on the floor, so I made a wooden platform that rides up or down on a 2-post electric-hydraulic car lift. It lifts the machines to a comfortable work height," says C.J. Bunce, Perry, Kansas.

He bolted a 4 by 8 sheet of 3/4-in. thick plywood to a pair of 2 by 4's on edge. He attached 2 push mower wheels to one end of the plywood, and a couple of fold-down metal handles purchased at Home Depot to the other end so he can easily move the platform around.

"I just wheel it over and set it on the lift's arms, which are about 4 in. off the floor," says Bunce. "A pair of small wooden blocks serve



Wooden platform rides up or down on a 2-post electric-hydraulic car lift, raising machines to a comfortable work height.

as a drive-on ramp. I use a remote control to raise the lift to a comfortable standing work height."

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"Big Wheel" Floor Jack

This new "big wheel" off-road floor jack from Pro Eagle is equipped with a pair of large diameter wheels on back, making it much easier to maneuver on uneven ground than a jack with 4 smaller wheels. The solid composite wheels also make it easier to run over small obstacles in your shop, such as extension cords, rocks, and other debris.

The company sells 2 "bigwheel" floor jack models: a 2-ton model called "The Beast"; and a 3-ton named "Kratos". Both are made of aluminum and have solid steel axles. Their weights range from 46 to 60 lbs., and they come with an 8-in. adjustable extension with rubber grip pad that can be used to lift high clearance off road vehicles.

The Kratos model sells for \$469.99 plus S&H; the Beast for \$409.99 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pro Eagle (ph 310 513-8222; www.proeagle.com).



Floor jack is equipped with a pair of large wheels on back, making it easier to run over small obstacles in your shop.

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