

**At first glance the Festool MFT3 appears to be a very expensive workbench.** Look more closely and you will find a versatile mobile support system that will satisfy most requirements, especially when you're away from the workshop

# Festool MFT3 multifunction table

I recently needed to replace my radial arm saw (RAS), and was expecting to spend in excess of £1300, but even so the replacement would not be able to cross-cut a 600mm wide kitchen worktop. So after some research I decided to buy Festool's MFT3 multifunction table together with their TS55 circular saw. With some minor limitations and for about two thirds of my expected budget, I had replaced my RAS and could at last take my key woodworking capability to a customer's house and produce perfect cuts through kitchen worktops on site.

## What you get

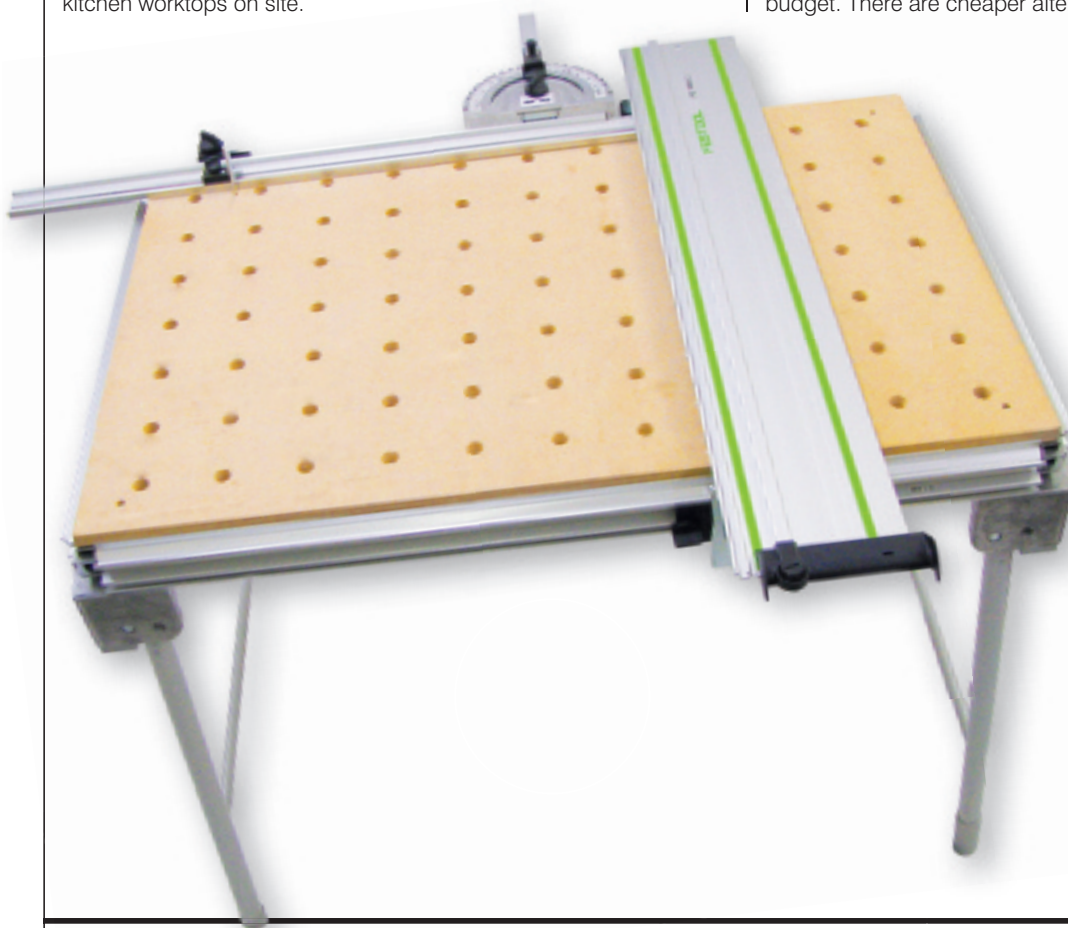
The MFT3 comes complete with a folding table, a perforated top, a swivel unit, back and end stops, a guide rail with mounting clamps and a deflector. Assembly takes five minutes the first time you do it, but with practice it can be done in about a minute.

As extras I bought the Festool TS55 circular saw (£405.60, to be reviewed soon), a pair of lever cramps (£41.64 each) and a pair of fixed cramps (£75.84 for the pair), and I was still well under my RAS budget. There are cheaper alternatives to the lever cramps with

conventional screw tightening, but these are quick and easy to use. There's nothing else that you'll need unless you want to expand the MFT3 with a saw bench or router table add-on.

## Setting up the MFT3

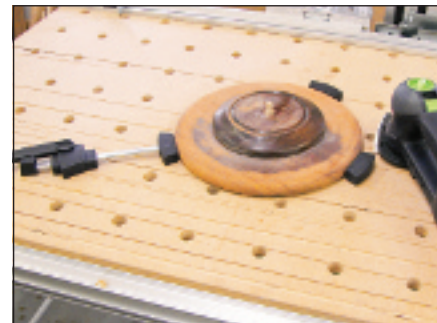
First open out the legs and tighten the four leg clamps (the MFT3 can be used folded if required). The height of one leg can be adjusted to cope with uneven floors. The first time you set up the table, you have to follow some simple instructions to attach the guide rail to its pivoting mounting bracket. Slide the guide rail onto its mounting plate along the T slot at the rear of the bench. When it reaches the adjustable stop, secure it by tightening the knob. Slide the front rail support bracket along the front T slot until it reaches its adjustable stop and secure it. Finally position the swivel unit and the back stop, and fit the end stop on the back stop if this is required.



Use the guide rail, swivel unit, back stop and end stop to make an angled cut



Fit the lever cramps in the tabletop holes to clamp a horizontal workpiece



Use the fixed cramps and dogs to grip awkwardly-shaped items securely



You can also use the guide rail with a router for making a wide range of cuts

### A helping hand

The instructions are clear, and there are plenty of videos on the internet to take you through the process step by step if you need some visual reference. Once the table has been adjusted for square, it should retain its accuracy even after frequent disassembly and reassembly. The first time you set the table up, you'll have to do a dummy cut with your saw along the guide rail to cut the sacrificial splinter guard on the rail. This then gives you a precise alignment line for all future cuts.

### Using the table

The MFT3 stands 900mm high, and I soon began to appreciate the slight increase in height for a workbench... so much so that I've now changed the height of my other benches to match.

To set up for a cross cut, start by laying the workpiece on the tabletop and lower the guide rail down onto it. Adjust the height of the front and rear guide rail support brackets so the guide rail sits flat on top of the workpiece. Raise the guide rail and measure where you wish to make your cut. Position the work so the plastic splinter guard on the guide rail is lined up with your pencil mark. Set the saw depth and make the cut.

With the MFT3 you can cross-cut work up to 700mm wide – that's far more than most radial arm saws under £2,000 can manage. Cuts can be made at any angle and, using the end stop, they can be accurately repeated. Using a router on the rail is straightforward and precise too.

The multiple holes in the MFT3 tabletop provide you with many different ways to cramp your work, and they allow the use of 20mm diameter bench dogs too. The T slots in the side rails take the ends of the Festool lever cramps, thereby increasing your many cramping options still further.

### Summing up

If you need to cross-cut or rout material up to 700mm wide accurately, the MFT3 (fitted with the appropriate saw or router) is well worth considering. If you want the option of being able to work on site, this workbench starts to appear essential. And if you do all your woodworking at the back of the garage, then the ability to fold up your bench looks particularly attractive.



TESTED BY PETER PARFITT

## SPECIFICATION

<b>TABLE DIMENSIONS</b>	1157 x 773mm
<b>WORKING HEIGHT</b>	900mm
	with legs folded 180mm
<b>MAX WORKPIECE WIDTH</b>	700mm
<b>MAX WORKPIECE THICKNESS</b>	78mm
<b>LOAD CAPACITY</b>	120kg
<b>WEIGHT</b>	28kg

## VERDICT

This is a versatile and sturdy mobile workbench that can be moved easily from job to job or used in a small workshop.

- PROS**
- Clever design
  - Easily folded and transported
  - Integrates with Festool circular saws and routers

- CONS**
- Makes sense only if you have a Festool saw or router
  - The clamps are expensive

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

**PERFORMANCE**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Festool UK
- [www.festool.co.uk](http://www.festool.co.uk)

The complete kit folds down neatly into the back of a small hatchback



The height of the guide rail support brackets can be easily adjusted and locked



You can also fit the lever cramps in the T slots on the side to act as a vice



The guide rail and back stop allow you to cross-cut work up to 700mm wide