

NEW TOOLS

All the latest tools and equipment tested and rated for a better workshop

Numatic extractors

In an exclusive first test, we look at Numatic's extractors for woodworking

For some reason Britain appears to have a remarkable ability to produce vacuum cleaners and extractors. Yorkleen and CamVac are well known amongst woodworkers for their extraction systems, in both cases based on high pressure, low volume technology, aka a vacuum. Numatic, in contrast, are hugely well known in cleaning circles for the Henry they produce, but have made few inroads into woodwork, until they recently teamed up with APTC to produce a range of vacuums to suit workshops.

It helps that Numatic's factory is in Chard, just down the road from Axminster in Somerset. Their reputation precedes them. We were primarily testing their NVD750 model, which has twin motors and two inlets. It is designed to be flexible, to be able to provide a small-ish workshop with one sucking centre to meet all your needs.

The problem for most of us is that we produce two, or perhaps three types of 'dust'. The shavings we generate with a planer-thicknesser aren't technically dust at all, though the extraction only has to fail for us to learn that it's actually very dusty indeed. They take up a lot of space, especially the long, string softwood ones from a planer-thicknesser, and really need to be carried in a 100mm pipe and dumped into a bag or big bin. Dust from a sander is as fine as you can get, and has to be controlled carefully, and somewhere in between is the coarser stuff from router tables and saws.

The aim with the NVD750 is that with twin motors and both 50mm and 100mm inlets it can deal with all these types of dust, for only about £280. If one day in the future you are creating so many



After Henry Numatic and Axminster are working together to take the principles of the famous Henry vacuum, and produce a versatile system for woodworkers

shavings that you need dedicated extraction for your planer-thicknesser, you would either keep the Numatic for working with power tools and other machines, or use it to collect shavings in some form of intermediary cyclone. It certainly has the power to do so, but is noisier than the single motor models.

One flexible feature of these dual-inlet Numatic extractors is that the waste can be collected in either a 'sealed' bag or in the bin. There are three stages of filtration to do this. The finest filter stops dust down to 0.5 micron, which is pretty much standard for this sort of machine. Protecting that is a second filter, and finally there's the bag.

Numatic have their own Trapit bags, which are designed to collect as much dust



as possible, while keeping the air flowing. There's a rubber inlet on these bags which fits over the central inlet on the bin. That's how you would use the extractor when sanding and sawing. You don't, however, want to have to fill up bags with volumes of shavings from a planer-thicknesser or



Dust-free There's significantly less dust left on the surface after sanding with a random orbit sander that's attached to the Numatic extractor, than sanding without suction (above)

router table or spindle moulder. That's when you link the machinery to the side inlet on the NVD750, either with a 100mm hose directly, or stepped down to 50mm. When you do that you have to cut one of Numatic's Trapit bags in half and slip that over the two filters so that you don't take up unnecessary space in the bin.

Swapping around

Set up that way you can collect a fair amount of shavings before you need to empty the bin. If you're constantly swapping between jobs, and don't have much time, the dusty hassle of swapping the bag set-up would become a time-consuming chore. However, for many home woodworkers it will be ideal, and anyway you could easily run the airflow via a dustbin and straight into the bag so that the fine dust is easy to manage (just take out the bag and discard) but the extractor isn't full of shavings.

Alternatively you could store the extractor outside, in a shed of its own. All

Compact The Numatic feels like a good size. Big enough to take a good quantity of waste, but easy to store away

you'd need to do is to plug it into a 13 amp socket inside the workshop, leaving the switch on the extractor permanently on. A neat feature on all Numatic extractors is that the power lead can be unplugged at the motor so you could have two leads: one permanently to a shed outside and a shorter one should you need to use the extractor somewhere else. The more you think about these machines the more versatile they get.

Wall mounting

One final option, which we haven't been able to test yet, is Numatic's wall-mounted WMD750 extractor (c.£500). We'll tell you more about this in a subsequent issue, but if you have nowhere to site an extractor outside the workshop, this might be a good solution in that it dumps the waste into a plastic bag when it builds up enough inside the drum. A rubber valve stops the plastic bag being sucked up into the vacuum during operation. As a result it doesn't need the cage you find on similar extractors, which can be a real nuisance. But more of that later when we put it to the test.



You can fit a 50mm hose to the outlet on the extractor instantly, and potentially feed that back into the workshop. The twin motors produce a fair amount of heat, about the intensity of a hair dryer on a low setting. It would be a shame to waste it.

You can't really see how you'd go wrong with this top-end Numatic. Whatever happens you're bound to be able to find a use for it long into the future. The only reservation is that it might be too powerful for some people, but in stepping down to the NV750 single motor model (which has a 50mm side inlet instead of the 100mm) you probably won't have the power to collect planer shavings, either directly or via a cyclone. You'd lose the versatility that is the selling point of the NVD.