

Newcomers and Elmers Net: Setting up a Workshop

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Why would you want to set up shop?

Some possibilities would be:

- building kits
- repair
- exploring
- getting older equipment
- practicing on junk
- learning how things go together

You can buy supplies locally or through mail order

- Buy practice boards parts and so on and put things together on practice breadboards
- They don't have to work!
- buy junk at Goodwill and practice taking out capacitors resistors etc. and practice putting them back in
- see if it works or find out why it doesn't
- Learn how to solder
- learn to use wire strippers, crimpers

Some Basic Tools

- Soldering iron, solder, and a solder-removing wick
- Digital volt meter (DVM) for measuring circuits
- Needle-nosed pliers, wire cutters and strippers, set of screwdrivers
- Set of small tools can be useful, as normal tool sizes can be too big.
- Good lighting and magnification is important, as well as a means of allowing you to work hands free
- Harbor Freight can offer a lot of interesting tools for reasonable prices, and there are a number of specialty electrical supply dealers online such as Allied, Mouser, and Jameco; locally Debco and R&L have parts as well, and Radio Shack is beefing up its parts supplies again
- I would recommend making a space devoted to projects in your home or garage, where you can leave parts out without being disrupted
- Also parts boxes and fishing/tackle boxes can make great storage units, as you will quickly start building up supplies if you get into it
- As you advance into more electronics work, you may want to get an oscilloscope, and even a spectrum analyzer, although these can get rather expensive

There are PC capable units which have a limited range, but will let you use your laptop or desktop for display and software purposes; these are significantly cheaper

- During the net there was some good discussion about space and the need to make sure that you have enough to work in, and if possible, enough so that you can leave your tools and parts/projects out without being disturbed.
- Also safety was brought up in terms of using any kind of power tool
- A good workstation means that the table is at the right height for you, and it should be large enough that storage bins for tools and parts do not get in the way
- lighting was also emphasized; there is no substitute for good lighting, and magnification where needed
- developing a good junk pile of parts is also useful because you never know when a little part salvaged from something else can save time and money