

TOOL REVIEW :

BLACK AND DECKER POWERFILE

A very surprisingly, very small belt sander

by ROBERT AYLIFFE

The Black and Decker range of power tools for years has been characterised by jazzy appearance and a sort of low end respect.

The exception for me has always been the Black and Decker Workmate work bench. They are as ubiquitous as the late lamented Triton tools were, and are the most versatile of all of the folding workbench choices in my observation.

They're easy to adjust for height, fold and carry around. They are surprisingly tough and you can get spare parts for them. They are very stable, with the fold out feet giving a really broad footprint.

But what's this, 'Powerfile', you asks.

Boat builders do a lot of sanding. In fact, some describe boat building as sanding and fairing with some carpentry and measuring up, in between.

Most sanders have limited use in confined spaces.

I bought a Powerfile two years ago. It gets used a lot. To my surprise, it's still running really well.

The narrow (13mm) belt enables me to sand, carve and remove paint in previously inaccessible



Powerfile with Festo Dust extractor adaptor. Seems that the new 'Cyclonic'. My fully dust extracted Black and Decker Powerfile. This form of dust extraction, teamed with a festo unit makes this a very clean machine. I use mine on metals as well as wood and glass. Dust extraction system might have fixed this problem



The Black & Decker Powerfile showing custom dust extraction adapter.

areas. Depending on which belts you buy, you can sand/file wood, plastics and even metals remarkably well.

The variable speed trigger is a great aid to control the rate of material removal.

The only gripe I had with mine is that the dust bag that was standard two years ago was, as most dustbags on power tools seem to be, completely useless. So awful in fact that I was forced to make an attachment that goes on where the bag was so I can run my Festo dust extractor connector to it. MUCH better.

The dust extractor is essential, because that skinny belt really does haul material.

All dust is dangerous, wood dust is VERY dangerous.

(I notice the more recent Power Files have a 'Cyclonic' dust extractor on the back in place of the dreadful bag, looks like it has an on board power driven exhaust blower leading into the container. Now, THAT seems a good idea. If it is as good as I suspect, I hope it catches on.)

The Powerfile is, like many belt sanders, noisy. Wear good ear protection. The Black and Decker Powerfile lives up to its name.

It removes material surprisingly fast, yet is capable of doing surprisingly fine shaping in other wise inaccessible areas. ■

SPECIFICATIONS:

Power	350 W
Speed	Variable
Speed	900-1,400m/minute
Belt Width	13mm
Belt Dimensions	451 x 13mm
Lock On Switch	Yes
Dust Extraction	Dust Bag System
Tool Weight	2 kg
RRP	\$149, with 'Cyclonic' Dust extraction
Recommended	