

Installing Tablesaw Blades



Q The description of your Blade-Loc blade changer seems to imply that I shouldn't tighten my tablesaw's arbor nut good and tight. Do you really mean I should only tighten it with my bare hand?

A By all means, please use your wrench on the arbor nut. The bare hand we mentioned is the one with which you hold the blade still while the other hand uses the wrench. (Blade-Loc is a plastic gizmo that keeps your hand off the sharp saw teeth but lets you feel torque from your wrench quite sensitively.)

The point is that "good and tight" is not nearly as tight as most of us think we have to make it. It turns out that tightening the arbor nut only as much as will let your wrench loosen it while you hold the blade safely with your hand is exactly tight enough. It shouldn't be *easy* to loosen the nut, but neither should it require enough torque to risk injuring your hand. Jamming the blade with a stick and cranking on the wrench until sparks fly from your gritted teeth is not only bad for your teeth, it's bad for the blade. Thin-kerf blades in particular may wobble visibly when overtightened; tighten appropriately and they run sweet and true just as they should. Since arbor nuts always tighten opposite the direction of blade rotation, moderately tight is both safe and effective, not to mention a heck of a lot easier to undo and redo as needed. When you're using stacked dado blades, revert to the jamming stick and tighten the nut firmly; you've got a lot of pieces of steel to hold still together. But for single saw blades, moderation is a fine policy.