

The Fast Cobber's Tool List



Here is the list of tools that any Fast Cobber needs, organized by building phase:

Excavation Tools

- ◆ Shovel(s)
- ◆ Rake(s): bow/level/heavy-duty garden rake
- ◆ Pick-axe/Pick Mattock and/or Cutter Mattock
- ◆ Wheelbarrow to remove the organic material

Optional

- Rock Drill
- Angle Grinder with diamond-coated blades

Foundation Tools (for a stacked rock foundation)

- ◆ Gloves and Steel-toed boots (safety first!)
- ◆ Iron bar to pry rocks out of the ground

Optional

- Rock dolly to move rocks too big or heavy to get into a wheelbarrow
- Rock chisel if you don't have the patience to use rock wedges to stabilize each rock
- Eye protection if you try to chip or shape rocks

Fast Cobbing Tools

- ◆ Tarps: as many as your mixing area can hold times 2 or 3 so you can stockpile bricks. Cut somewhere between 2'x3' (70cm x 1m) and 4'x5' (1.2m x 1.5m) to whatever size best suits your ability to carry bricks, i.e., the larger the tarps, the heavier the bricks)
- ◆ Garden hose(s)
- ◆ Easy to use valve - a thumb valve is best - to turn the hose on and off at the mixing area
- ◆ Sprinkler head to allow the water to be quickly and easily dispersed as you wet the material (the less moving parts, the longer it lasts)
- ◆ Shovel(s) to get material out of the ground and onto the tarps
- ◆ 1', 2', 3', and/or 4' levels to ensure that you are building plumb (I like 2' levels that have thin metal edges to trim wet walls; a smaller level should fit on all sizes of windows)
- ◆ D-handled spade for two-handed trimming (especially dry walls)
- ◆ Old handsaw to trim curves and corners
- ◆ Machete to trim smaller spaces
- ◆ Crowbar: pointy end to make holes; claw end to trim back walls, position windows, etc.

Optional

- Garden Rake for herding loose straw back into your strawbale pile

Roofing Tools - Beams, Purlins, Sheathing

- ◆ Saw (I love Japanese handsaws!)
- ◆ Measuring tape
- ◆ Pencil
- ◆ Drill (Hand Brace or Cordless Drill) with bits up to 3/4" (for the largest lag bolts)
- ◆ Chisel and Hammer (to recess the heads of the lag bolts into the beams)
- ◆ Ratcheting Driver Socket and/or wrench (9/16" or 14mm will likely drive the lag bolts)
- ◆ Carpenter's Square
- ◆ Impact Driver with No.2 Robertson bits
- ◆ Peeling Spud
- ◆ Planer, either hand or portable power/cordless
- ◆ Ladder(s)

Roofing Tools - Metal

- ◆ 1/4" or 5/16" or 3/8" hex bits for Impact Driver (for roofing screws)
- ◆ Metal snips (aviation snips): left, right and straight cut versions and/or off-set snips

Finishing Tools

- ◆ 1/2" D-handle Mud Mixing Drill
- ◆ Drill Mixer attachment
- ◆ 5 gallon buckets
- ◆ Trowels of choice: metal with handles or plastic lids
- ◆ Plasterer's Hawk (I made our three)
- ◆ Spray bottles
- ◆ 1/4" and 1/8" screen to sieve cob and clay, preferably on a 2'x3' frame

Optional

- Sponges for texturing/smoothing the final layer of plaster
- Carving tools (screwdrivers/knives/etc) to sculpt bas relief or etched designs onto or into your walls
- Brushes for applying linseed oil on cob floors and walls
- Stainless steel bowl for thinning linseed oil
- Rags for cleaning up

Your list could be much longer if you want to incorporate more wood or other non-cob materials into your building, either as a floor, or railings, furniture, or other accents.