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Research Team Confirms That Even Near Infinite Number Of Home Woodworking Clamps Not Always Quite Enough

Study shows more clamps reduce stress, but never eliminate it.

EVANSVILLE, ONTARIO — In a groundbreaking study that surprised absolutely no one, researchers have confirmed that even a near-infinite number of home woodworking clamps is not always sufficient. The study followed woodworkers across dozens of garages, workshops, barns, basements and one heated outbuilding whose primary purpose appears to be clamp storage. Researchers found that regardless of how many clamps a person owns, there eventually comes a moment during glue-up when one additional clamp would have solved everything. A Predictable Shortfall “We observed participants with hundreds of clamps,” explained lead researcher Dr. Wayne Putnam. “Some had thousands. The result was always the same. At the critical moment, they still looked around the shop and said, ‘I could really use one more clamp.’” The report found that clamp shortages occur most frequently during panel glue-ups, cabinet assembly, awkward corner joints, projects involving curved surfaces and approximately ten seconds after the glue has been applied. Researchers estimate the ideal number of clamps can be calculated using a simple formula:

Correct Number of Clamps = Current Number Owned + 1 Participants reported owning impressive collections that included Jorgensen hand screws, Irwin Quick-Grips, pipe clamps, bar clamps, strap clamps, spring clamps, C-clamps and several mysterious clamps purchased because they were on sale. Despite these resources, 94.7% of projects still required at least one additional clamp. The remaining 5.3% were later found to have required two. **The Law of Expanding Glue-Ups** “It’s not that the clamp collection is inadequate,” said Putnam. “It’s that woodworking itself always seems to expand to exceed the available clamping capacity. The more prepared the woodworker becomes, the more complicated the glue-up becomes.” The study also found that woodworkers who claimed they had “enough clamps” were either new to the hobby, recently retired, or standing too far away from their next project to fully understand the situation. One participant, who requested anonymity because his family believes he has enough clamps, said the findings confirmed what he had long suspected. “I’ve got clamps on the wall, clamps under the bench, clamps in drawers, clamps in boxes and a few clamps that I only recognize by instinct,” he said. “But when the glue is wet and the joint is slipping, I still find myself staring into space, imagining the one clamp I don’t own.”

Emergency Substitute Clamp Deployment Researchers also documented a secondary phenomenon known as Emergency Substitute Clamp Deployment (ESCD), in which woodworkers briefly attempt to replace a missing clamp with objects never designed to apply controlled pressure. The most common substitutes included bungee cords, duct tape, ratchet straps, rope, heavy toolboxes, stacked paint cans and asking a spouse to “just hold this for one minute.” Success rates varied.

“Substitute clamping methods are often creative,” said Putnam. “They are also the reason many projects include dents, fingerprints, evidence of mild panic and one slightly crooked corner that nobody is supposed to mention.” The study concluded by recommending that woodworkers continue buying clamps whenever possible, especially when they are on sale, not because the practice may solve the problem but because it appears to improve morale.

Pre-Glue Confidence Researchers also introduced a new measurement called Pre-Glue Confidence (PGC), defined as the brief period when a woodworker believes all necessary clamps have been laid out on the bench. In most cases, this confidence disappeared within fourteen seconds of applying glue. A related condition, Post-Glue Bargaining, was observed when participants began whispering to boards, cauls, wedges and gravity itself in an effort to hold the assembly together until help arrived. Family members interviewed for the study expressed support for woodworking in general, while also noting that the phrase “just hold this for a second” has rarely, if ever, meant a second. **The Emotional Economics of Clamps** Several participants attempted to solve the shortage by building larger clamp racks. This strategy showed promise until researchers noted that every rack project required additional clamps during construction. The team also warned against counting clamps too early. A clamp hanging neatly on the wall may appear available, but once the project begins it is often discovered to be too short, too long, already glued to something, or located behind the one sheet of plywood nobody wants to move. According to Putnam, the safest recommendation is to buy one more clamp than seems reasonable, then immediately accept that this is only a temporary



STUDY FINDINGS	CLAMP COLLECTIONS OBSERVED IN THE WILD			COMMON SUBSTITUTES WHEN ONE MORE CLAMP IS NEEDED	RESEARCH NOTES
✓ More clamps reduce anxiety.	 JORGENSEN HAND SCREWS	 BAR CLAMPS	 C-CLAMPS AND BIGGER	• Ratchet straps • Bungee cords • Rope • Duct tape • Heavy toolboxes • Stacked paint cans • Asking spouse to “hold this for just a minute” Success rates vary.	Researchers also documented a common behavioral pattern. Upon discovering a clamp shortage, participants frequently paused, stared thoughtfully at the project, and then attempted to quickly use increasingly creative substitutes while glue is drying.
✓ More clamps improve confidence.	 PIPE CLAMPS	 SPRING CLAMPS FOR GOOD LUCK	 CORNER CLAMPS AND MANY MORE		
✓ More clamps increase project success.					
✓ More clamps create storage problems.					
✓ One more clamp is still needed.					

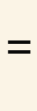
AT PRESS TIME...



A local woodworker with 326 clamps was reportedly standing in front of an open pickup truck loaded with additional clamps he got at a yard sale. When asked whether he had enough already, he appeared confused. “Enough for what?” he replied.

THE UNIVERSAL CLAMP FORMULA

CORRECT NUMBER OF CLAMPS =
CURRENT NUMBER OWNED + 1

 +  =  Perfect, until it's not.

OFFICIAL WOODWORKER COMMENT



“You can never have too many clamps. You can only have too few.”