

Building a Festool Kapex work center for your shop or studio



The Festool Kapex compound miter saw has been extremely well received in every market in which it has been available. In this brief tutorial we will take a look at just how easy it is to build a work center for the Kapex saw that is convenient when you want to use it, yet tucked out of the way when you don't.

This compound miter saw (CMS) is different from all the others in that it glides on bars that project out only to the front of the saw allowing it to be placed right up against a wall. All other currently available CMSs are guided by rods that stick out as far behind the saw as they do in front of the saw so it cannot be used against a wall and must project out into the room or work space too far to be convenient. But, that is just where the story begins.

This shot shows a lot of the reason for all the excitement. Note that I have placed my Kapex work center right in front of and against an outside window. That provides nice natural light and the saw projects away from the wall and into my studio only the 20.5"

width of the base unit upon which it sits. The fences are 14" away from the wall so the work piece can slide past the 12" deep wall shelves on the out-feed side and through the open door way on the in-feed side. That allows me to work on even very long pieces without taking up much work space or losing the valuable shelf space on the green the wall unit.



Here is a view that shows just how small and compact this Kapex really is. I can easily enter the studio through the doorway behind me since the Kapex work center tables and fences I built don't need to stick out much further than the open door itself so it certainly is not in the way. I like the saw to be placed so the bed is just below my waste, some 40" off the floor in my case. That allows me to operate the saw with either hand (note the vertical handle that works just as well for the left hand as for the right unlike most horizontal handles that have to be moved for left handed use) while allowing the commonly used miter and bevel adjustments to fall right at hand.

Note also how the ability to place the Kapex right against the wall (window in this case) allows the Festool dust collector to sit in front of the 12" deep green wall storage unit while projecting into the room only slightly more than the 20.5" deep eight drawer



cabinet upon which the Kapex is perched.

The DC hose goes up behind the out-feed table/fence and over a “L” hook on the wall to hold the hose out of the way but does not restrict the movement of the Kapex or interfere with its excellent dust collection features.

These two photos show how the available crown molding stops can be quickly put in place or removed as you work. In the upper photo the black crown stop is in place on the in-feed side and in the lower photo it has been removed.



Note also that I set the in-feed and out-feed tables and fences so they are far enough away from the available Kapex add on wings that the wings can be removed or placed without moving the saw or the tables/fences.

Here the add on wing is being removed.

The in/out-feed tables and fences I built are permanently attached to the base cabinet and to the walls for stability. I made these from bloodwood and ash as both are hard, dense woods that tend to stay very straight.

They also look good which is important to me as I have to live with them day in and day out.



The base cabinet itself I built some years ago from vertical grain clear fir. The top was



designed to slide back and forth as a moving table for my band saw, but rarely was used for that purpose so I commendeered it for this use instead when the Kapex arrived.

The base cabinet is 38" wide (the top projects out beyond that), 36" high and 20.5" deep.

Contrast these dimensions to the height of the multi-function work tables that Festool sells. The MFT3/Kapex table is 31" high and the MFT3 itself is 35.5"

high, the height of the Kapex work surface when sitting upon the MFT3/Kapex table.



Here are shots of the Kapex work center looking both directions. The top photo is from the out-feed side looking across the in-feed table and fence that allows long work pieces to project into the open door way.

The bottom photo is taken from the doorway looking back across the out-feed side and towards the front of the studio and gallery.



You can see just how closely the Kapex hugs the wall and it projects out into the room no further than the dust collector, or the orange Heigner scroll saw or the wood storage racks beyond it. It simply tucks in out of the way very unlike all the other CMSs I tried and removed from the studio as they simply took up too much space.

***Not the Kapex,
it is a keeper.***

My Kapex will spend most of its life in the studio and be used for making fine furniture, a task at which it excels. But, there are times when I will want to remove it and use it elsewhere as well. There are four designed-in holes in the base of the Kapex (red arrow) that make it easy and fast to fasten the Kapex to the table top. Pull those four screws and you can pick up the Kapex and walk away without changing anything on the work center.

The Kapex only weighs 47 pounds, folds compactly and features cord storage and hand holds that make it easy to handle unlike so many of the other CMSs on the market today.

The other hole just beyond the red arrow fastens a rubber foot to the bottom of the Kapex. It could also be used to fasten the Kapex to a table if you wish.



Because it is so compact and can be placed right against a wall it is easy to construct your own Kapex work center using what you already have in your shop or studio. You don't need to buy a fancy commercial set up unless you intend to frequently move it job site to job site.

The next six photos will show how it nestles into my studio space.



The photo below shows how the Kapex work center is out of the way of the major machining operations done on a European combination machine.

The bottom photo is taken from the other side of the studio looking past the routers work center (right), the main sanding/assembly table (left), the oscillating edge and spindle sanders (center left) and the combination machine (photo center) over to the Kapex work center



in front of the window.

I really like this set up as it keeps everything at hand, but not under foot.

The upper photo shows the Kapex work center looking past the band saw center (this one a 24" band saw) and the four Festool MFT assembly tables.

The center photo just moves a bit further around the band saw center to look past the 14" band saw and the MFTs and really shows how tightly the Kapex integrates into the space against the wall.



I hope this short tutorial will inspire you to build a Kapex work center in your shop or studio. It does not need to be fancy to take advantage of the many advanced design features that make the Kapex so very much better than any of the other CMSs I have used in the past.

Set the Kapex at a working height that fits you and your work habits. Build the in and out-feed tables and fences to sit in plane with the working height of the Kapex and straight and parallel with the Kapex fences. Keep your in and out-feed tables and fences far enough away

from the edges of the Kapex that you can add or remove the available Kapex wings, and so you can remove the Kapex itself without having to move your in and out-feed tables. You want your Kapex work center to remain in place and properly aligned so each time you put the Kapex in place it is immediately ready to go to work.

Enjoy!

Jerry

