TESTED BY
ANDY STANDING

Achieving a good finish on any woodworking project invariably involves a certain amount of sanding. *Careless sanding can cause more problems than it solves, so a gentle touch is needed. This Makita finishing sander is small and light enough for one-handed use, but powerful enough to produce a fine finish*

Makita BO3711 orbital sander

£80.37

There are several types of powered sander. Random orbit sanders and orbital sanders are predominantly used as finishing sanders. The random orbit type is popular because it can produce a very high quality finish; however, its circular sanding pad limits its versatility. The orbital sander, on the other hand, can be used right up into corners and also produces a fine finish. Sanders using a third of a standard sheet of abrasive paper bridge the gap between palm sanders and half-sheet sanders, combining light weight with a reasonably large sanding plate.

The Makita BO3711 is a neatly designed tool with a smoothly contoured body that is extensively covered in softgrip rubber. It's comfortable to hold either with one hand or two. The trigger is large and there is a positive lock-on button. The variable speed control is mounted on the top and is easy to adjust.

Changing sheets

It can be irritating changing abrasive sheets on sanders with fiddly clips and poorly positioned clamps. This Makita has a particularly good clamping system, with clamps that open wide and large positive operating levers. The machine is also supplied with a perforating plate, so you can use any abrasive sheets you wish and still have through-the-sheet dust extraction.

Dust collection

A dustbag is supplied with the sander and is remarkably efficient at collecting the sanding dust. The motor's internal fan helps blow the dust into the bag. Unfortunately no vacuum adapter is supplied, so it's difficult to connect ot to a workshop vacuum extractor without a degree of improvisation.

Summing up

This is a comfortable and efficient machine to use. The overall vibration level is low, and this makes it pleasant to use even for long periods. As you would expect from Makita, this is a solid, high-quality machine, with little to criticise. It's well-designed and comfortable to use, and will make a welcome addition to your workshop.

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	190W
SANDING PAD	93 x 185mm
WEIGHT	1.6kg
ACCESSORIES	dustbag, perforating plate

VERDICT

This is a well-balanced sander that produces an excellent finish with minimum effort.

PROS
- Low vibration
- Variable speed
- Good abrasive clamping

CONS
- Vacuum adapter not included

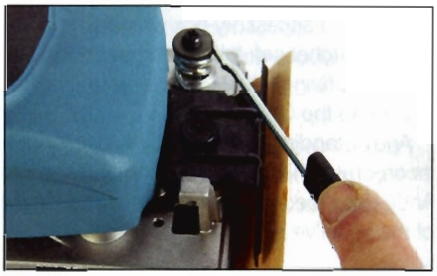
VALUE FOR MONEY ■■■■■□

PERFORMANCE ■■■■■□

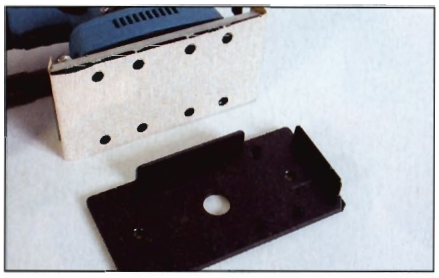
FURTHER INFORMATION

- Makita
- 01908 211678
- www.makitauk.com

The operating controls are simple and well-positioned



A lever operates the clamping mechanism for the abrasive sheets



A perforating plate lets you prepare your own abrasive sheets

The sander is comfortable to use, even for long periods