

## TOOLS &amp; MATERIALS

## Iturra Design - Bandsaw-Blade Tension Gauge

Iturra's affordable bandsaw blade tensioning gauge works on par with higher-priced models.



By John White | Jun 01, 2001



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If you use a bandsaw for tough jobs, such as resawing or cutting thick stock, the blade tension must be set just right. But on most saws, adjusting the built-in tension gauge to the recommended setting results in a blade that's undertensioned. Generally, an undertensioned blade tends to wander, cut slowly and burn the stock. And when resawing, it often results in a barrel-shaped cut. But if you ignore the gauge and try to correct the problem by cranking down on the tensioning screw, you risk putting too much tension on the blade. And that can damage the blade, the saw frame, or both.

Industrial operators set the correct tension with a special gauge. But with a cost of more than \$300, this type of gauge isn't cheap. Now, however, Iturra Designs has begun selling a bandsaw-blade tension gauge at a more affordable price. The Iturra, like the higher priced gauges, measures the amount a blade stretches when tension is applied. The gauge is easy to set up and read. A dial indicator provides a readout in pounds per square inch (psi) of blade cross section, the standard measure of blade tension. Instructions suggest the best blade tensions based on the size of the saw and the type of cutting that's being done.

I used the gauge to tension a 1-1/2-in.-wide blade on a 20-in. bandsaw and a 1/4-in.-wide blade on a 14-in. bandsaw. As a test for accuracy, using the big bandsaw, I positioned the gauge directly above one of the high-priced gauges, so I could read them both simultaneously. In several tests, the two gauges read within a few percent of each other.

This is a high-quality tool that's carefully made and nicely finished, and it should last a lifetime. It would be a good investment for anyone using a bandsaw to do heavy cutting or resawing.

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**Editor Test Results:**

**Manufacturer Specifications:**

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Manufacturer	Iturra Design
Manufacturer's Phone Number	904-642-2802
Blade Size	All
Sizes	N/A
Compatibility	All bandsaws

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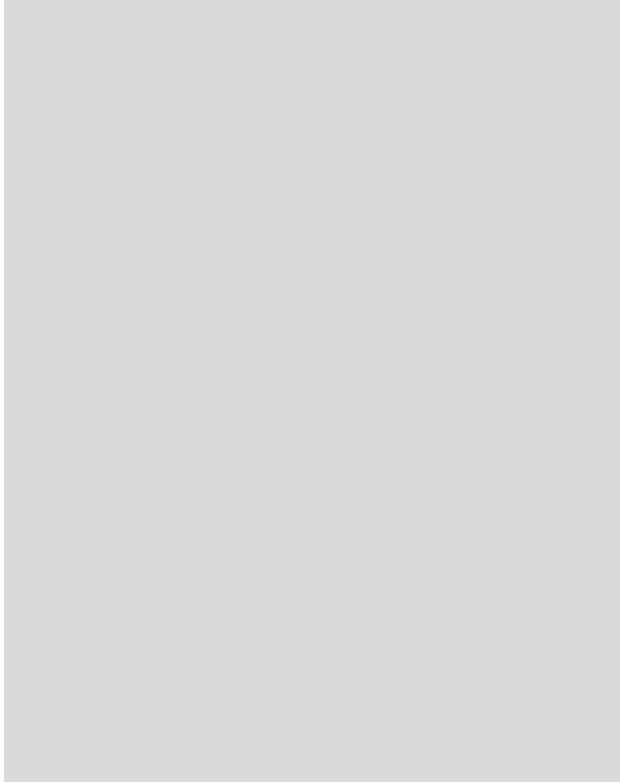
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