

How To Find The Best Entry-Level Welder

As a newbie, it can be challenging to find the right entry-level welder. To help you, we have compiled some of the vital factors that will affect your choice.

Factors to Consider

Know your skill level

When you know your limits and your skill level, it will be easier to choose a welder that will be comfortable and easy to use. Welders have different welding processes, and some methods are more challenging than others. These processes will be discussed in detail later in this article.

Power

While choosing an entry-level welder, you have to consider the power rating of the welder. The purpose of the welder will determine the power rating your welder will have.

If the welder is for small projects, you should be searching for a welder with a power input from 115 V and 40 V. If the project is heavy-duty, you will require a more powerful welder with a higher power input rating.

You must know your power and adapt accordingly. If the welder has a low amperage value, 135A or less, it is often compatible with most household power outlets. However, once the amperage is higher, you might require a 220 V power outlet. If your home doesn't have this, you might have to get an adapter or consult an electrician.

Portability

The ability to move your welder to where you need is essential, especially if you intend to transport the welder around frequently. As a beginner, you should buy a welder that allows you to carry it from job to job with ease. However, if your project doesn't involve moving from place to place, you might be content buying a relatively heavy entry-level welder.

Material to be welded.

Welders have different abilities. Some are designed for welding heavy and thick materials, while others are solely meant for light metals. You must consider the type of material and the thickness of the material before choosing an entry-level welder.

Brand

Buying a welder from a reputable brand is a safe choice. Although unknown brands might produce welders with decent performance, the parts might be hard to find.

Choosing a welder from a reliable brand is a form of insurance. That way, if any parts need replacing, you can easily find them on the market. Furthermore, traditional manufacturers of welders brands typically offer better customer service

and technical support.

Additionally, since welders use consumables, it's usually easier to find their products, and many work with third-party consumables, unlike welders from new or unknown brands.

Features

As a beginner, you need all the help you can get. Therefore, check out the features of the welder. An essential element that helps beginners is the addition of dial-in settings.

This feature makes your welding easier. A good welder for beginners will allow you to input parameters like metal thickness, type, etc. The device then considers these parameters to provide you with the best arc or output.

Other welders are self-adjusting in terms of power. They change the output in response to the input they receive. Some come with displays that show the output and input values and notify you when adjustments need to be made.

To ensure safety, some welders come with in-built safety features. One example of these safety features is overheating protection. Overheating affects the speed of your project. If the welder overheats, you might have to wait for a while for it to cool down before commencing the project. Overheating protection prevents this problem.

Welding processes

One mistake that many beginners make while choosing an entry-level welder is not considering the welding process. They often jump right in and buy a "top-of-the-line" welder, start welding, and discover that the welder's process is wrong for the material.

Some welders have complicated processes that the newbie might not understand. To assist you, I'll highlight which ones you should avoid as a newbie and those easy to start with.

MIG/Flux-Cored Welding

MIG welding involves using a spool gun to feed a line of electrodes. As electrodes feed through the gun, they form an arc with the metal. The heat generated is enough to melt the arc, and this, in turn, welds the metal material.

Because this process is done in the open air, it is susceptible to impurities like dust and other minute contaminants. If these enter the arc, they will affect the strength of the weld. This is why MIG welding involves a protective coat that repels air and contaminants.

MIG welding is an excellent welding method because it is pretty versatile and allows you to weld different types of metals together. It is also straightforward to master.

Other advantages of this method include:

Easy to maneuver

Produces a beautiful finish

Can be used for sculpture

In the context of this article, MIG welding is the easiest for a beginner to master. Unlike other types of welding (which will be discussed), you just have to control the gun. My son started welding with a MIG machine and was surprised to learn how much more difficult the other types of welding could be.

TIG Welding

TIG welding involves using a tungsten electrode to heat the metal, melt it, and form a molten puddle. Just as MIG welding, the process is susceptible to contamination and has a protective bubble.

TIG welding can be used to weld various materials; however, the metals to be welded are thinner than those welded with MIG welding.

The advantages of TIG welding include:

Incredible finish

Accurate welding

Ideal for delicate jobs

Despite the benefits, TIG welding is not for beginners. It is more complex to master than MIG welding.

Other disadvantages are: TIG welding is a slow process, complicated, and TIG welders are expensive.

Stick Welding

Stick welding produces some of the strongest welds and is used for very thick weld materials. A consumable electrode is heated till it melts, the material is heated till it melts, and the two parts are welded together.

Stick welding is used for the thickest of materials, including cast iron.

Advantages of this system of welding are:

It produces the most robust and most durable welds

It is a weather-resistant process and can be done in whatever weather

Works on thick materials like cast iron

Disadvantages of using this process are:

Doesn't produce a clean, neat finish

It is far harder to master than any other process

It cannot be used on thin materials

Welding involves more equipment than just a welder, I wrote a helpful article for beginner welders on the tools and equipment one needs to get started, I suggest you check it out.

Below is an interesting YouTube video that tests the cheapest welder on Amazon.

FAQs

What is the easiest type of welding to learn?

The MIG welding process is the easiest type of welding to learn. It is easy because you just have to focus on the spool gun. Other methods like TIG welding and Stick welding have a steeper learning curve and are more complicated.

Is stick welding stronger than MIG?

Stick welding might be messy and require more cleaning touches than MIG welding, but it produces the strongest welds. It can weld thick metal materials, including cast iron.

What is a good cheap welder?

The Super Deal MIG 130 AC Flux Core Welding Kit is the cheapest welder we reviewed for beginners. Despite the low price, it still comes with features that make it an excellent choice.

Is being a welder dangerous?

Like almost every other thing, welding can be dangerous if not done safely and with the right tools. A welder must wear PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) while welding. This equipment includes gloves, helmets, shoes, and so on.

Conclusion

The products in this review are the best welders for beginners. Choosing any of them is sure to provide you with an enjoyable and productive experience. If you do not fancy any of the products on the list, you should consider the vital points in the buyer's guide and use the knowledge to make the right choice. Happy welding!