AirSick 101

AIRBRUSH TRAINING

Compressors - The Basics

There are a few things you need to be familiar with when looking for a compressor. First, let's get familiar with the major components most compressors have in common. Then we will outline a few key points to be aware of when selecting the size and type of compressor for panting.

Compressor Parts

1: *Power Switch*: Be familiar with the location of your power switch. This should be kept in the off position whenever your compressor is not in use.

2: *Pressure Gauge*: The pressure gauge will display the current pressure built up in the tank. The pressure in your tank will continue to build until the gauge has reached its max capacity. Once your tank is full, the built in pressure regulator will automatically shut off the compressor motor. As the pressure drops in the tank due to use, the regulator will kick the motor back on and replenish the tank.

3: *Air Outlet Gauge*: An Air Outlet Gauge will tell you how much p.s.i (pounds per square inch) will be flowing through the air hose to your brush. You are able to adjust this pressure by turning the Pressure Control Knob either clockwise or counterclockwise.

4: *Air Outlet Valve*: This is where you connect your hose to draw air from the tank. Make sure you check this connection for air leaks regularly. You can outfit your Outlet Valve with a quick connect device that will allow for easy removal or connection of your air hose.

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5: *Pressure Control Knob:* In order to control the flow of air between your compressor and your brush, you will need to turn the Pressure Control Knob either clockwise or counterclockwise until the desired pressure has been reached.

6: *Motor*: Compressor motors vary in size and power. Some smaller motors remain on as soon as you plug the compressor in, and some are regulated by the pressure in the tank. Compressor motors come in two basic types: Oil filled, and oil free. Each type has it's advantages and disadvantages according to your price range and work load.

7: *Tank*: The compressor tank may sit along side or underneath the motor. This is where the air will be compressed and stored until it is released through the Air Outlet Valve. Tanks range in size from small and portable to large, heavy duty industrial size tanks. When air is compressed it gets hot, when the air cools moisture is formed and soon after water will begin to build up in the tank. To prevent water in the lines drain the air tank frequently through the drain valve located on your specific tank.

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Compressors Key points

Before selecting a compressor you will need to keep a few things in mind. Here are a few key points you should have answered before making an investment.

Oil Filled or Oil free?

These are the two types of compressors you will be choosing from. Both have their advantages and disadvantages when it comes to cost, noise level, maintenance, and reliability.

For the most part the oil-free compressors are less expensive and come virtually maintenance free. They come in all shapes and sizes and are usually more compact and easy to store. On the downside they are usually less powerful, extremely loud, and less reliable.

An oil filled compressor tends to be somewhat of an investment, requires regular maintenance and can require a much larger motor and power supply. The oil filled compressor is however much quieter, is more powerful, and with regular upkeep will outlast an oil-free model.

What type of jobs will you be doing?

When looking for the right compressor for you, consider the type of tools you will be using. If it's nothing more than a simple airbrush set up you need, we would suggest a compact model that you can keep in the corner of your workspace.

If you are looking to use larger detail or spray guns for base coating and clearing your projects, you will need to upgrade to a larger tank and motor. In this case we would recommend nothing smaller than a 30gal tank.

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Compressors Key points

What tools will you be using?

Compressor are all rated according to the air delivered (cfm or Lpm). As a guideline a 2HP compressor will deliver about 7 cfm and a 3HP compressor will delivery around 10.5 cfm.

When choosing a compressor it is important to calculate the amount of air required. A spray gun that requires 7cfm average air consumption will require a compressor of approximately 2HP. Be sure to check the cfm rating on the tools you will be using to select the appropriate size compressor for the job.

What type of power source is available?

Compressors of all sizes tend to demand a lot of power when in use. Most large compressors require a dedicated 15amp 120volt power source to ensure you maintain an adequate power supply.

This means that if you don't have the proper supply of power to the motor, you can fry electrical fuses and wiring when using other appliances along with a running compressor. So to ensure proper working load and safety, it is important to always check manufacturer specs when buying a new air compressor.

Well that was a lot of information but we hope that you feel a little better equipped when shopping for a new air compressor. If you have any other questions don't hesitate to give us a shout on facebook or send us an e-mail. Have fun and keep painting!

PRINTER FRIENDLY

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