



## Hand Trucks: Not Just For Appliances

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*Jim Ruen*

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I grew up certain that if my dad looked at a project and saw an easy way and a hard way, he would pick the hard one. I figured it must have been about character building. Forty years later, my son accuses me of only adopting labor-saving devices, like a hand truck, after he left home. He might be right.

Hand trucks are available today with larger wheels, appropriate for outside work as well as moving furniture and appliances. About a year ago, I bought one of the new and improved versions, and I love it. I've used it to move potted trees, large slabs of stone and even landscape timbers.

The great thing about it is how easy it is to secure an item in place. Once secured, the center of gravity can be lowered as much as needed for surface conditions. In the case of a long object like a large branch or long beam, attach one end to the hand truck, and it becomes a trailer axle. Moving the item is easy compared to carrying or dragging.

My son is especially frustrated when he sees me use the hand truck to easily move a slab of rock. He recalls all too well moving 90 tons of limestone chunks – big and small – that I used to build retaining walls. For most of it, he used a wheelbarrow. However, when it came to big slabs for steps, he or he and I would flip them end for end or roll them on edge to get them into place. In one case, his sister and mother were drafted, and the four of us pulled and pushed it across the lawn on wooden rollers. While the hand truck might not have been big enough for that particular slab, it moves others nicely. Of course, as my late father would probably tell me, it doesn't do much for character.

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