

Best Impact Wrench 2026

DeWalt vs Milwaukee vs Bosch vs Makita — Quick Reference · buildtoolhq.com

Torque Classes

Class	Range	Typical Use
Compact	150-250 ft-lbs	Automotive trim, small fasteners, tight spaces
Mid-torque	300-650 ft-lbs	Lug nuts, structural bolts, concrete anchors (all 4 tools below)
High-torque	800-1,400+ ft-lbs	Heavy equipment, large-diameter fasteners, fleet/diesel

Recommended Models

Brand	Model	Advertised	Tested	Weight	Platform
DeWalt	DCF891B	600 ft-lbs	329.5-392.6	3.7 lbs	20V MAX XR
Milwaukee	2962-20	550 ft-lbs	412.8	5.1 lbs	M18 FUEL
Bosch	GDS18V-330CN	330 ft-lbs	Not tested	3.46 lbs	18V CORE18V
Makita	GWT07Z	560 ft-lbs	Not tested	6.0 lbs	40V XGT

Tested torque: Pro Tool Reviews' independent inertia torque rig, same head-to-head round. DeWalt still won 'Best Overall' on application speed despite lower measured torque than Milwaukee.

Anchor Installation Torque (Simpson Strong-Bolt 2, ESR-3037)

Diameter	Solid Concrete	Grout-Filled CMU
1/4"	4 ft-lbs	4 ft-lbs
3/8"	30 ft-lbs	20 ft-lbs
1/2"	60 ft-lbs	35 ft-lbs
5/8"	90 ft-lbs	55 ft-lbs
3/4"	150 ft-lbs	100 ft-lbs
1"	230 ft-lbs	n/a

Use a calibrated torque wrench for the final set, not an impact wrench — manufacturers explicitly warn against impact wrenches for final anchor torque. An impact wrench is fine for driving the anchor down beforehand. Always confirm the specific product's ESR report.

General Bolt Torque Reference (SAE, Dry Threads)

Bolt Size	Grade 5	Grade 8
1/4"-20	~8 ft-lbs	~11 ft-lbs
3/8"-16	~30 ft-lbs	~44 ft-lbs
1/2"-13	~75 ft-lbs	~105 ft-lbs
5/8"-11	~150 ft-lbs	~210 ft-lbs

Reference values only — lubricated threads reduce required torque ~25-30%. Confirm engineering spec for critical fasteners.

Anvil Types

Friction ring (DeWalt calls it 'hog ring') — compressible ring grips the socket. Fast tool-free swaps. What all 4 tools here use by default.

Detent pin — spring-loaded pin locks into the socket. More secure, needs a tool to release. Better for overhead work. Makita's GWT08Z offers this as an alternative to the GWT07Z.

Cordless vs. Pneumatic

Pneumatic: better economics for sustained shop use, no battery degradation, no charging downtime. Needs a compressor.

Cordless: portable, lower setup cost, no compressor needed. Modern brushless tools have closed much of the torque gap.

Practical answer: pneumatic in the shop, cordless in the truck.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Using chrome vanadium sockets instead of impact-rated chrome molybdenum — they can shatter under impact loading
- Over-torquing anchors or structural connections — matching the spec matters, not just having enough power
- Assuming higher advertised torque means better real-world performance — impact rate and mechanism matter as much as peak torque
- Not bracing against torque reaction — a stuck fastener breaking free can snap the tool sideways with real force
- Starting a second battery ecosystem for one tool — especially relevant since Makita's GWT07Z runs 40V XGT, not 18V LXT

Full guide with per-brand breakdowns, tested-torque data, and buying recommendations:
buildtoolhq.com/post/best-impact-wrench-2026-dewalt-milwaukee-bosch-makita