

After completing a long overdue honey-do task of tiling our kitchen floor, I wondered if the inexpensive tile saw I bought at Harbor Freight (<http://www.harborfreight.com/4-12-in-portable-wet-cut-tile-saw-69230.html>) could be used as a trim saw. I already have a trim saw, but this tile saw has some features that are valuable to me that are missing from my trim saw. It is inexpensive, it can be purchased for less than \$50, if you use a coupon. It is virtually all plastic which makes it comparatively light and compact, an important feature for traveling in an RV. Finally, it has a large table to work on, about 18" square. Often times I find myself working with a slab that is too big for my trim saw.

So, how did this tile saw do as a trim saw? Not so good at first. The tile cutting blade is way too aggressive, I was unable to make any cuts without chipping the stone. The blade guard hinge is designed to be loose, so it completely covers the blade while cutting tile. One more thing, it's as loud as a shop vac! It was obvious that if I was ever going to use this saw as a trim saw, modifications were in order.



The first modification was to replace the tile saw blade with a lapidary blade. Finding a replacement blade was not as easy as I expected. This saw uses a 4-1/2" blade with a 5/8" arbor that is interchangeable with a litany of die grinders and cut off tools, all of which have very aggressive blade designs. Lapidary trim saws uses 4" blades with 1/2" arbors. Even if I chose to use a 4" lapidary blade the 1/2" arbor hole simply wouldn't fit the saw. Then I found it, a 4-1/2" lapidary blade that would fit my tile saw. It is available on EBay, ships from China, and cost \$14 (<https://www.ebay.com/itm/171289601747>). This saw blade actually has a 3/4" arbor hole, and the seller will supply you with a 5/8" bushing, if you request it during your EBay purchase at check out.



The second modification was to fix the blade guard, so it will hold whatever position I put it in rather than free falling to the table. That modification also allowed me to see the cut line while I was working. This was an easy mod. All I did was add some washers under the nut that holds it all together until there was enough friction to hold the blade guard from moving. The down side of this mod is that now it sprays water when you're cutting. There is a channel that encircles the table to catch and recycle the water, so I cut a piece of plastic and wedged it in the channel to act as a splatter guard and that completed this modification.



Finally, what to do about how loud this saw is. Not much, it still sounds like a shop vac. But if you're looking for a budget minded trim saw and you don't mind the noise, this may be for you. You can be up and running for less than \$75, and with these modifications it does a fine job as a trim saw. I'm sure my neighbors wonder why I spend so much time vacuuming in my back yard.