

Quickly Sorting Fasteners, version 1.1

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I rarely throw fasteners away yet do not have the patience to sort them. There is usually a mix of bolts, wood screws, metal screws, and cut off ends of bolts. Washers and nuts sit on the bottom of the can.

Eventually they will go into my sorted tubs, tins, and drawers but it is not urgent. Well, not until the mix starts to overflow.



It is certainly tedious and barely worth my time to pick up the first item, locate the proper resting place, and toss it in. Gotta be a better way!

I think the following method works better. It is based on focusing on as few variables at one time as possible. I handle the bolts and screws more often but spent less time performing the entire sort.

If others try this method, they can either prove it in, refine it, or replace it with a better procedure.

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I built this sorting tray a long time ago. It is marginally better than just using a plastic lid. Harbor Freight sells a plastic version².



My first step was to pick out all metal and wood screws.



They got dumped into a container. I rarely need these kinds of screws and have far too many of them.

Throw them away? Never!

² Harbor Freight calls it a Funnel Tray, item#37081 and sells it for about \$3.



What remained in the can were bolts and threaded rods.



All items equal to or greater than 1/4" diameter were put back into the can.



At this point, it was easy to match identical threads and then realize they were 10-24 bolts and rod.

At each step, *match* identical and then *identify*.





It was equally easy to spot all of the 6-32 bolts.



The one 10-24 bolt with custom head was then obvious.



The two 8-32 bolts were equally easy to spot in the tray.



Next, all of the larger bolts were dumped into the tray. Out came the $\frac{1}{4}$ -20 fasteners. Just remember to first match identical threads and then identify it.



The $\frac{3}{8}$ -16 bolts and threaded bits then jumped out at me.



One bolt left. Ah, it is Metric!

I welcome your comments and questions.

If you wish to be contacted each time I publish an article, email me with just "Article Alias" in the subject line.

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