

## **ASK SMITTY**

No woodworker (except *SMITTY*, of course) has ALL the answers. From time-to-time, everyone hits a snag, trying to figure out some sort of in-shop problem. Don't worry. *SMITTY* can help. Just use the special e-mail link directly below to send your questions to *SMITTY*. He'll do his best to get back to you soon, with the answers to those questions.

### **Here are the questions...and *SMITTY's* answers for this issue...**

#### **Removing oil stains from wood**

From John S. Stacy  
(e-mail question — city/state unknown)

*I have some unfinished cherry wood in my workshop that has been there for years, but my problem is that I have been handling the wood and it has oil from my hand on it. How can I get rid of the oil on the wood so that I can stain it without the fear of dark spots?*

If it's just the oils from your skin, I would suggest that you wipe the wood down thoroughly with naphtha. Naphtha will break down oils and will also work for motor oils or light machine oils...but you may have to wipe it a couple of times.

**DANGER:** Naphtha is **HIGHLY VOLATILE & FLAMMABLE**. Do this outdoors in a well ventilated area such as the driveway or somewhere else outside and well away from any open flames or potential sparks. Read and follow all precautions on your can of naphtha very carefully before using it.

If you're planning to finish your completed project with a Danish Oil or Tung Oil finish...and the oil you speak of as being on the wood now is also an oil used for finishing woods, it may not be necessary to do anything. If, on the other hand, you're planning to stain your project, it's best to remove all oils first.

#### **Cutting thin strips on a table saw**

(e-mail question — city and state unknown)

*I want to cut thin strips on the table saw, 3/32" to 5/8", I was told to use a splitter. Can you tell what a splitter is and how to install it?*

On a table saw, a splitter is also referred to as a "Riving Knife". With most table saws (MARK V included) the splitter or riving knife is the piece of sheet metal that sticks-up from under the table and supports the upper saw guard. This metal piece is typically about 1/16" to 3/32" thick and in addition to supporting the guard, also serves to keep the saw kerf from closing-up on your blade.

With a hand-held circular saw, there is no such device and your kerf could close-up on you, causing your blade to bind. In this case, you could use a product made by the Jorgensen Clamp folks called a

“Kerf-Keeper”. With this clamp-like device, you start your cut until it’s projecting about a foot behind the back side (exit end) of your circular saw. Turn off the saw and unplug it. Insert the Kerf-Keeper into the kerf and tighten-down the clamp to hold the kerf open while you make the remainder of your cut.

A piece of advice about shaving off thin strips on the table saw. I would advise you to NEVER set your rip fence to make a cut that’s less than 1/4" from your blade. WHY? Because it’s too difficult to get a push stick into such a narrow opening without the potential of it or your workpiece grabbing and causing a hazardous situation.

As much of a pain as it might be, you should ALWAYS have your wider workpiece running between the blade and your fence (the piece you’re shaving the 1/32" wide piece off of)...and you should ALWAYS use a push stick or block to push this wider piece through the cut.

You’ll have to take the additional time to re-set your fence for each cut....but when you get through with the job, you’ll still have all of your fingers and be otherwise injury-free.

### **Applying a bubble-free polyurethane finish**

From Bill Antalek

(e-mail question — city/state state unknown)

*I remember receiving a woodshop tip about eliminating bubbles when applying polyurethane. I don’t remember exactly what it was, and there’s no way to search the tip database. Do you know a good way to eliminate the bubbles?*

Use a pair of discarded nylons or pantyhose. Wad it up into a ball and use it to wipe on your finish.

This approach works particularly well on turnings and other curved or contoured surfaces.

Here are two more tips....1): Try NOT to stir the finish too aggressively or shake the can...as either of these will cause bubbles. and 2): Don’t apply a polyurethane finish on a hot, humid day.

### **Poor cuts with a router bit set**

(e-mail question — Name, city and state unknown)

*I purchased a Stile & Rail Router Bit Set and attached it my MARK V headstock using the Router Chuck. However, experimenting on some pine, using low (800 or so) rpm, the cutters don’t seem to cut at all through the stock. Against the grain it chips the wood to shreds...with the grain it pulls and throws it through. What am I doing wrong?*

Router bits are designed to cut most efficiently and smoothly when running FAST. Hand-held routers run at 18,000 to 20,000 RPM’s. With the MARK V, “Fast” means full speed (5,700 Rpm’s)..NOT 800 rpm.

Start by setting your MARK V speed dial on “Rout/Shape FAST”. You’ll get a much smoother cut.

Adjust your table/fence depth-of-cut to take about half your cut in the first pass.

After you make the first pass cut, re-adjust for the final depth-of-cut and make your second and final pass.

ALWAYS feed your workpiece AGAINST the rotation of the bit and NEVER with the direction of

rotation, as this will grab and “throw” your workpiece. These techniques should solve your problem.

### **Adapting Model 510 Outfeed Table to Model 520 (Pro Fence System) machines**

From Rich Bullock — Gladstone, MO.

*I have converted my MARK V Model 510 to a 520 (Pro Fence System machine). This week, I wanted to use the Outfeed Table that I had purchased several years ago but there appears to be no provision for attaching it to my upgraded machine. The question is, should I use the old 510 tube that the Outfeed Table use to hook up to, then use a tap on the upper surface of the 520 bars to provide the attachment point...or does Shopsmith have a new brackets for the Outfeed Table?*

You're in luck. Special brackets are available for converting the Model 510 Outfeed Table for use on Model 520 (*Pro Fence System*) machines. They are available in our printed Accessory Catalog or online by ordering part number 521651 Support Table Conversion Kit - it's only \$10.50.

### **Seeking angle set-up chart for compound miters**

From Cindy Bridger  
(e-mail question — City/state unknown)

*Where can I get a chart of the angle set-ups for making compound miter cuts?*

Try [http://www.betterwoodworking.com/compound\\_miter.htm](http://www.betterwoodworking.com/compound_miter.htm)