

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...

Trouble with Mortising Attachment

From Dan Birt via e-mail

I have a Mark 510 and a Mortising Attachment. I have tried for over 15 years to make it work. The drill does not seem to cut. And the instructions call for the hold-down to fit in a hole in the fence...but there's no hole. Any suggestions?

Sounds like you have an "OLD" Mortising Attachment for a new machine.

The Hold-Down for the 510 Fence uses a special vertical rod with a tapped hole in the bottom that attaches to a T-Slot insert. This insert slides in the T-Slot in the top of your fence. You'll need to call Shopsmith's Customer Services to order this Rod and T-Slot insert (1-800-543-7586)

Now....for the cutting problem. Hollow Chisel Mortisers are a bit tricky. First, even when they're sharpened properly, they require a LOT of pressure to cut...especially when working with hardwoods. For that reason, when using a Mortiser, it's ALWAYS a good idea to cut a wooden "third leg" support that stands between the underside of the worktable and the shop floor.

Many woodworkers remove most of the stock first by boring a series of holes....then clean up the perimeter with the Mortising set-up. Finally, the chisel must be SHARP to cut properly. The older Mortising sets were not really honed properly when they came from the factory.

When you talk to Customer Services, tell them when you BELIEVE your Mortising Attachment was made and they'll sell you the proper honing stones for sharpening YOUR chisels. These stones slip into your Drill Press Chuck for performing this honing operation.

Novice woodworker needs hardwoods answers

From Jonathan A. via e-mail

I'm new to woodworking but thoroughly enjoy my Shopsmith MARK V...to the point where I keep adding things to it...most recently, the Bandsaw and Pro Fence System. I'm moving beyond precut woods like oak and poplar into the maples, especially curly and birdseye.

Can you tell me how lumber is sized re 4/4 or 8/4, etc. and whether or not I should expect s4s or s3s or what. Also, could you direct me to a web resource on the subject. Also, since I have you, where's your choice for making good wood purchases. Thanks for your answers and thanks for a great machine.

Hardwood lumber is sized in "quarters". 4/4 (*four-quarter*) is 1" thick — 5/4 (*five-quarter*) is 1-1/4" thick — 8/4 (*eight-quarter*) is 2" thick, and so forth.

s4s means "surfaced four sides". s2s means "surfaced two sides"...this is the most typically available lumber.

The best place to purchase wood is locally, where you can SEE what you're getting BEFORE you take it home.

However, there are times when the lumber you want (exotics, for example) are NOT available locally...and you'll have to purchase via mail order. In these cases, look for supplier ads in magazines such as Fine Woodworking, Wood, Workbench, etc.

As for information...try the woodworking magazine websites (*Fine woodworking, Wood Workbench, Family Handyman,*) *Etc. There are also several great books available on wood technology. Check your local book stores.*

P.S.: This issue of "Hands-On" contains Part 2 of a 4-Part series on hardwoods. Go to the archives link to see Part 1 (in the July/August, 2004 edition)...and watch the next two issues for the final 2 Parts of this story.

Sticky Cricket Bat

From Phillip B via e-mail

I have put fiberglass tape on my prized cricket bat. I've managed to remove the tape, but the bat is still very sticky. I need to remove the glue so I can oil the bat. Any suggestions?

Two options:

"Goo-Gone" comes in a small, lighter-fluid-like metal can...or "Bestine" brand rubber cement thinner, available at art supply stores. Good luck.

Troubles with Bandsaw Blade “Lead”

From “Buddy” via e-mail

I have owned my Shopsmith since 1984. The past couple of years I have had a real problem with my bandsaw not cutting a straight line. I have gone through the manual more than once making adjustments on everything I could adjust, but nothing has helped. It won't cut straight whether you're using the Fence or cutting freehand. If you're using the fence you just have a crooked line when your done. If your cutting freehand you have to keep turning the wood to compensate for the crooked cut you are making.

I have replaced the blades several times and they still don't cut straight, I've even wondered if I may have got a bad batch of blades, (I buy several at a time) they act as though there isn't a set on one side of the blade. Could this be possible? If you have any ideas I'd appreciate the help.

Since you've repeatedly gone through all the set-up and alignment procedures in your manual...and replaced your blades “several times”....one of the following is more than likely your problem...

- 1) You may be trying to feed the work through the cut too rapidly. Try being more patient and slowing down your feed rate. You'd be surprised how many times this approach will solve the problem.
- 2) You may be expecting your bandsaw to cut like your table saw. Generally, this is not the case. Most bandsaws and blades have a certain amount of “lead” (the tendency of the blade to “wander” off the line in one direction or another) that affects the straightness of the cut line. As a 30+-year woodworker, I've learned that no two blades perform identically. As a result, a small amount of compensating is usually required for each blade. I “automatically” compensate for this without thinking about it by merely adjusting my angle of feed.

If you'd like to use a Fence to ensure line straightness, you'll have to offset (or “angle”) your fence accordingly. Here's how. Take a 3/4" x 3" wide x 24" long (or so) piece of hardwood and draw a line down its length, separating it into two 1-1/2" wide pieces.

Adjust your Bandsaw properly (guides, etc) and cut a straight line VERY SLOWLY....compensating by adjusting your angle of feed as you cut.

When you get within 6" of the exit end of your cut, cease cutting and hold your workpiece firmly down onto the tabletop (without allowing it to move), while you turn off your bandsaw.

Now, using a sharp pencil, draw a line along the back (nearest the bandsaw's rear throat support) side of your board.

Adjust the angle of your fence to match this drawn angle and all rip cuts will be straight....PROVIDING YOU'RE USING THE SAME BLADE.

If these don't solve your problem, I suggest that you call Shopsmith's TOLL-FREE Technical Services Hotline at 1-800-762-7555. You may need to send your Bandsaw in for service

“Balancing” cradle rockers

From “Johnnie” via e-mail

How do you balance a cradle made with rockers? This is to make it set level after completion. Cradle has a slight list to one side.

Good question. Let me see, now.....guess you could always add weights to the ends of the rockers like balancing a tire...but somehow, that doesn't seem like the right answer. My guess is that your answer really lies in the curvature of the rocker bottoms. Unfortunately, once everything is assembled together, this may be tough to fix.

How about this.....make two duplicate rocker bottoms out of thin hardboard or plywood. Be sure the plywood rockers extend about 1/4" below the “real” rockers. Then, double-face tape them to the existing rockers....except offset them toward one side or the other slightly. Experiment until you find the right position.

Once the right position is identified, transfer the correct curvature to the bottoms of the “real” rockers and file, then sand them to the correct curvature. Hopefully, this will work. It's my best guess.

Carbide sawblade sharpening

From H. Staton via e-mail

What's the best way to sharpen a carbide circular saw blade?

Sharpening circular saw blades is a tricky business that's best left to a professional sharpening service. This is NOT a job for the home woodworker...especially when working with carbide blades...which require diamond wheels and specialized set-up devices to control tip angles precisely.