

How to Sharpen Woodworking Tools



by eHow Hobbies, Games & Toys Editor

Introduction

Experienced woodworkers use a variety of methods to keep their tools sharp. Sharp tools are essential to good work, and many woodworkers take pride in their sharpening skills. Here are a set of instructions to sharpen woodworking tools that a beginner can easily master. This method uses a waterstone.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderate

Things You'll Need

- Dual 220/1000-grit waterstone
- Honing guide
- Scrap plywood
- 220 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 1/4-inch-thick piece plate glass

Steps

1 Step One

Purchase a waterstone with two grits. A good one to start with is 220 on one side and 1000 on the other. Waterstones use water as a lubricant and are softer than the traditionally used oilstones, so they cut faster.

2 Step Two

Soak the waterstone in water for 15 minutes. You will need to keep the stone wet throughout the sharpening process.

3 Step Three

Use a honing guide to keep your tool at a proper angle. The guide sits directly on the stone, allowing you to switch stone grits without having to readjust the guide.

4 Step Four

Place a sheet of scrap plywood under your working area to contain the mess that sharpening your tools will create.

5 Step Five

Flatten the back of a chisel or plane iron by placing the blade flat on the 220-grit side of the waterstone and repeatedly rubbing the blade across the stone. Maintain even wear on the stone. Keep going until the entire blade surface is scratched, then repeat the process on the 1000 grit side of the stone.

6 Step Six

Place the blade of your tool loosely in the honing guide and adjust the position to achieve the proper primary bevel. 25 degrees is a good all-purpose angle to work with. Make sure the blade is square to the edges of the honing guide.

7 Step Seven

Sharpen a very worn blade with the 220 grit side of the stone. If the blade just needs touching up, use the 1000 grit side. Place light pressure near the blade's edge with your fingertips and stroke the blade over the stone in a back-and-forth motion. Use the entire surface of the stone to maintain even wear. Keep the stone soaked with water while you work.

8 Step Eight

Continue stroking the blade over the stone until you see a 'burr' (also called a wire edge) on the back side of the blade, which indicates that you're ready to move on to the 1000 grit (if you started with the 220 grit). Stroke the blade over the surface of the 1000 grit stone as in step 7.

9 Step Nine

Create a secondary bevel (if desired) by adjusting the honing guide to an angle that is 1 or 2 degrees steeper than the primary bevel. Move the blade across the stone as you did before to achieve a good edge.

10 Step Ten

Flatten the surface of your waterstone to correct uneven wear. To do this, simply lay a sheet of 220 grit wet/dry sandpaper on a piece of 1/4-inch plate glass abrasive side up. Wet the paper and place the stone over it. Rub the stone back and forth to smooth away scratches and gouges.

Member Comments

 by [woodworkerktc](#) on 5/20/2008



This ehow article is very clear and I think useful. A video demonstration that might back up some if this is at:

<http://woodtreks.com/how-to-hand-sharpen-using-waterstones/34/>

Good luck with developing your sharpening skills. It's worth the effort!

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