

# OLD STREET TOOL, Inc.

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## The care, use and tuning of your new strike block plane:

***Warning:*** *Your new plane is a single iron plane. As such, there is nothing except a firmly set wedge to keep your plane's iron from falling through the mouth. Handling these planes, without the wedge firmly set, can be hazardous. Please set the plane's iron while holding it over your bench; preferably not over material for an important project. Please explain this and supervise children or other users who may not be aware of the risks of single iron planes.*

## Sharpening

The iron supplied with your plane is sharp and ready for use. It is suggested that you accustom yourself to the plane with the iron as supplied before making changes to its edge.

Your sharpening stones (or what ever sharpening medium) must be flat. Once the face of the iron (often referred to as the back) is flat, it's best to only use your finer stones to remove any burr left from honing the iron's bevel. This will help limit enlarging the shaving aperture by keeping the iron near it's original thickness. Stropping can be done, but it is important to avoid rounding the front edge of the iron. Felt buffing wheels tend to round or dub the surfaces that form the edge.

Since your strike block plane has a bed angle of 40°, we've taken care to grind the bevel of the iron at 25° and hone at less than 30° in order to retain as much clearance angle as possible. It is very advantageous to maintain this regime in order to keep your plane working up to its potential. It will work with less of a clearance angle, but will require pressing harder into the work while leaving a “burnished” surface.

Since one of the main uses for a strike block plane is for shooting miters, it is best to keep the cutting edge as straight as possible. Though, since it can also be used as a short joiner, it is possible to slightly “kill” or soften the corners of the cutting edge by tilting the iron slightly on your sharpening system.

If you use a honing guide (we recommend you learn to do without), please keep in mind that the iron tapers slightly, width-wise, from cutting edge to heel. This slight narrowing will need to be accounted for in this instance, as well as when re-establishing the edge when the iron needs to be ground.

## Setting

Setting the iron, with a hammer, for a specific depth of cut while keeping the cutting edge parallel with the sole can be difficult and mysterious if you are not experienced with wooden bodied planes. Acquiring the skill to accomplish this will take some practice and patience. However, investing the time and effort to learn this skill will reward you with precisely controlled cuts and surfaces ideal for their purpose.

We suggest you use a small (6 to 8 oz.) brass hammer to set your plane's depth of cut. This is done with light taps to the heel of the iron. Steel hammers will eventually mushroom the heel of the iron. When the final setting is reached, apply a final tap to set the wedge. It shouldn't take a lot of force to hold the iron in place. A mallet tap on the wedge is all that is necessary.

A plastic faced mallet can be used to adjust depth of cut. A light tap on top of the toe section will back the iron off and a light tap on the heel of the iron will increase depth of cut. Each time the depth of cut is changed the wedge should be reset.

Remove the iron or set the wedge with a wooden, hard plastic or dead-blow mallet. These softer mallets will limit long term marring of your plane. A sharp rap, with your mallet, to the heel will release wedge pressure. A tone change will indicate this release of pressure.

## Use

As already mentioned, the most common use of your strike block plane is for shooting miters as well as end grain. For this purpose, it can be set to take a very fine shaving, and used with a shooting board, miter shooting board, miter jack, etc. If you make sure the iron is sharp, while maintaining adequate clearance angle, and set it for a very fine cut, you can accurately produce miters which are ideally prepared for gluing up or end grain ideally prepared for finishing.

Alternatively, in keeping with the early literature, your strike block plane can also be used as a short jointer for smaller materials. Given the 40° bed angle, however, it will be best suited for materials which do not present significant planing difficulties. Again, it may be advantageous to use it with a shooting board for this purpose, and you may wish to set your iron for a little heavier cut than when shooting miters.

Fine shavings rarely have enough strength to actually eject from the plane as you may be used to. You may have to manually clear the escapement to keep a view of the cutting action. Should your plane's mouth appear to plug with shavings or "choke" simply take another cut. These planes will usually clear themselves on successive passes.

## **Tuning**

Seasonal or occasional tuning may be necessary. You may also have to do an initial tuning after your plane acclimates to the humidity level of your shop. It is suggested that you allow your new plane to acclimate to your shop's environment before making any gross changes to the sole; two or three weeks should be enough. Another high quality plane, set very fine, can do this or you can sand sole irregularities with fine sandpaper attached to thick (1/4" or more) plate glass. You should never have to use paper more coarse than 320 grit and we suggest you start with 400 or 600 grit. Care should be used to remove as little as possible and still get the sole flat. The wedge should be set to a normal working tightness with the iron withdrawn above cutting position when tuning or lapping the sole.

## **Maintenance**

The finish on your plane is Min-wax "Antique Oil" finish, which doesn't expand as it dries. It should be compatible with other high quality finishing oils. It's a good idea to coat the sole with fresh finish after tuning and to maintain the finish in worn spots. After applying finish we suggest buffing with fine steel wool and waxing with a high quality wax such as Tre-Wax.

## **Storage**

We suggest removing the iron for long term storage. We also suggest relieving pressure on the wedge if the plane isn't going to be used for a day or two.