

OLD STREET TOOL, Inc.

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The care, use and tuning of your side bead plane.

Sharpening

The iron supplied with your plane is sharp and ready for use. We suggest that you accustom yourself to using it as supplied before sharpening or making changes to its edge. We typically refine the profile so it matches that of the sole of the plane when the iron, including the tang, are registered against the left, or blind, side.

When sharpening becomes necessary, it is vital to keep the profile of the cutting edge as closely matched to the profile of the sole of the plane sole as possible. The honing bevel can be maintained with an appropriate slip, or abrasive cones in a flex-shaft grinder. In doing so, however, it is important to keep a few things in mind.

First, the cutting edge of the left, or blind side, is designed to die back into the sole of the plane near the transition into the fence. This avoids an unsightly “step” where the cutting edge terminates at the tip of the iron on that side. Second, as the curvature of the cutting edge approaches its termini, where the cutting most closely approaches that of a scraping cut, it is critical to maintain a slight clearance angle. This is already established on the iron as you receive it, so we suggest that you take note of it and attempt to maintain it during subsequent sharpenings. Finally, the tip of the cutting edge which creates the quirk needs to be sharp to allow the plane to sink into the cut, yet is very delicate due to its small area. Special delicacy while honing this area is highly recommended.

If a time comes when the profile of the cutting edge requires significant adjustment to match the plane's sole, the bevel may be ground using a narrow wheel with a rounded edge for the concave portion of the profile. If the size of the profile is too small to allow use of a thin grinding wheel, a grinding conical tip in a flex-shaft grinder may suffice. This is best done after first defining the desired shape by grinding or honing at right angles to a line scribed following the profile of the plane's sole into layout dye on the face of the iron. This requires a very light touch and a freshly dressed wheel, and the goal is to leave a hair-line flat at the desired profile which can be honed away when sharpening. The bit of the blade is slightly trapezoidal in shape so that it can be maintained at full width as the iron shortens through subsequent sharpenings.

Setting

Your plane will arrive with the iron retracted up into the body with the tang resting against the left, or blind-side, cheek of the wedge mortise. The iron can be advanced as needed by simply

tapping the heel of the tang with a small brass or plastic mallet, after which the wedge will need to be re-set by tapping with a wooden or plastic mallet. When you need to remove the iron for sharpening, simply tap it down as already described and it will release due to being tapered. Similarly, if you need to set the iron for a lighter cut, it is best to drive it down to release it, then set it in a retracted position and advance in the manner already described.

Use

The use of side bead planes is probably the most straight-forward of any of the moulding planes. The body is held vertically, with the fence held firmly against the edge of the piece being worked, and repeated strokes taken until the plane quits cutting due to the depth stop contacting the surface being worked. In fact, this is so straight-forward, that, especially with smaller side bead planes, one can often stick the bead in its entirety in less time than it would take to set up a router for the same task.

Tuning

Changes in seasons and/or environmental conditions in your shop may cause the body of your plane to change shape to some extent. And, this may be accentuated by the necessary presence of the boxing (persimmon) in these planes. Though we try to minimize the effects of this through careful stock selection as well as keeping the mass of the boxing as compact as possible. If, despite these efforts, your plane distorts enough to effect its functioning, it may require some careful tuning. However, due to the presence of the boxing and delicacy of the profile, we strongly urge you to contact us for advice before undertaking such a task.

Maintenance

The finish on your planes is Min-wax “Antique Oil Finish” applied as a wiping varnish. It should be compatible with other high quality finishing oils. It is a good idea to add fresh coats to any worn areas, from time to time, or areas of the sole which have been tuned. After applying finish we suggest buffing with fine steel wool and waxing with a high quality product such as Tre-Wax.