Layout & Measuring

Large capacity calliper for big jobs

Use two "c-clamps" to clamp the legs of two 16" x 24" framing squares together around/across the object to be measured. Following this procedure, you can even use the scales to measure the distance directly.

Layout & Measuring

Transferring patterns for spindle turnings, legs, etc.

Attach a sheet of white paper (large enough for the pattern) temporarily to the wall. Set the spindle you wish to duplicate vertically in front of the paper and very close to it. Position a bright lamp in line with the spindle so it casts a sharp-edged shadow onto the paper. Adjust the distance between the lamp and the shadow to achieve the sharpest shadow. Then, simply trace along the shadow with a pencil to transfer the pattern.

Finishing

Particle-free smoother for wood finishes

Conventional abrasives and steel wools can, at times leave small abrasive particles or steel fibres in critical wood finishes during the smoothing process. When smoothing a finish that must be free of these particles, try using ScotchBrite pads, instead.

Sheet goods

Make-it-yourself carrying handle for sheet goods.

Cut a 1" x 1" rabbet along one edge of an 18" long piece of 2" x 2". Screw & glue your 2" x 2" flush with the bottom (18") edge of an 18" long x 8" wide piece of 1/2" or 3/4" plywood. The connection of the two pieces of stock should create an "L" and a 1" deep by 1" wide channel near the bottom of your plywood piece.

Near the opposite edge of your plywood piece, drill two 3/8" diameter holes, down about 1" from its top edge and about 4" in from each end. Slip the two ends of a 30" long piece of clothesline through these two holes and knot the ends to form a carrying handle.

To carry your 4' x 8' sheet goods, simply set the edge of your sheet into the channel formed by your plywood and 2" x 2", reach around and grab your rope handle and carry.

Miscellaneous tips

Invisible tambour canvas

Unfortunately, the un-primed white canvas that's most often recommended for gluing-up tambours (roll-tops) will easily show through between the slats when the tambour is rolled up and down. This is especially true on projects with dark coloured slats.

To solve this problem, use dark brown (or appropriate coloured) fabric dies to darken the canvas before assembling the tambours. Be sure it's completely dry and iron the canvas before gluing-up your tambour.

Band saw

Safely holding ultra-small pieces for
band sawing

Sometimes, it's necessary to cut extremely small pieces of stock that are impossible to grasp properly without getting your fingers well inside the red "safety zone"...where fingers aren't supposed to be! This problem can often be solved by guiding your stock with the eraser ends of two pencils.

Table Saw

Setting a saw fence parallel to the blade

Setting your rip fence so it's parallel to the blade could be a difficult task. If you have a Shopsmith MARK V, your owner's manual will tell you how to do this. If you don't have a MARK V owner's manual...or you're using another type of table saw, you can also make any necessary adjustments by using a set of inside callipers. Lock the callipers in position at approximately 6" apart. Touch one leg of your callipers to your fence face and the other leg to a selected blade tip where it meets the table surface at the FRONT of your table insert slot. Rotate your blade so the SAME tip is now meeting with the table surface at the BACK of your table insert slot. Adjust your fence setting or worktable so this distance is identical at both ends of your table insert slot.

Miscellaneous tips

Keeping machine pulleys from working loose

Machine pulley setscrews have a tendency to work loose at the most inopportune times.
To prevent this, replace your standard setscrews with two shorter ones approximating the length of your original. Tighten the first setscrew
against the shaft of your machine or motor, and then tighten the second setscrew against the first.

Joinery

Fitting shelves tightly into dadoes

If you own a thickness planer, here's a simple but important tip for making tight-fitting shelf-to-cabinet fits. ALWAYS cut the dado or groove that your shelf is to fit into BEFORE you plane your lumber to thickness. By doing this, you can adjust your shelf thickness slightly to form a snug fit in the groove or dado.

Miscellaneous tips

Re-gluing edge splinters on projects.

Use a heated clothing iron to set yellow wood glue quickly when repairing splintered areas. Set the iron on medium heat and touch it to the glued splinter for no more than 30 seconds. Be careful not to get glue on your spouse's iron. A piece of brown paper grocery bag or a couple of thicknesses of cloth between the iron and the surface to be glued will help prevent this problem.

Gluing, assembly fastening

Drilling/sizing considerations for wood screws

Screw size #	Body Drill size	Pilot Drills In soft woods	Pilot Drills In hard woods	Counter bore size*
4	1/8"	1/16"	5/64"	1/4"
5	9/64"	5/64"	3/32"	1/4"
6	5/64"	5/64"	3/32"	5/16"
7	5/32"	3/32"	7/64"	5/16"
8	11/64"	3/32"	7/64"	3/8"
9	3/16"	7/64"	1/8"	3/8"
10	3/16"	7/64"	1/8"	7/16"
12	7/32"	1/8"	5/32"	1/2"

*To accept standard sized dowels, plugs or buttons

When a wire wheel loses its cutting abilities

After a lot of use, a wire wheel can get dull and ineffective. The first and most obvious approach to getting more work out of it is to reverse its direction of rotation. Usually, this will extend its life for a while. However, it will eventually become dull while running in this direction, as well. When this happens, reverse its rotation once again and run it against a coarse grit sharpening stone or grindstone to create sharp, new tips on the bristles.

Shop safety

Four table saw safety tips

1: Attach your push stick to the wall or the front of your saw with Velcro or sticky-backed magnets so you can grab it quickly when needed.

2: ALWAYS use your saw guards and splitters to keep your hands clear of the blade and prevent the saw kerf from closing up on the blade and causing a kickback.

3: Try to avoid cutting crooked or warped stock, as it is much more likely to twist and bind during cutting.

4: When ripping, always be certain to feed your stock all the way past the blade until the cut is complete to avoid kickbacks. Use a push stick to keep your hands clear of the blade at all times.

Turning

Creating decorative burn lines on your spindle turnings -- without burning your fingers

Holding a piece of thin wire or coat hanger against a rotating, turned spindle has always been a great way to create darker accent lines around its circumference. unfortunately, it's also often been a great way to scorch the old fingers, as well. Next time, try replacing the blade on your coping saw or hacksaw with the wire. You'll get better control and won't have to worry about burning your fingers.

Gluing, assembly fastening

Giving your nails an improved grip.

Any "old-timer" woodworker will tell you that rosin-coated nails have a grip that just won't quit. Unfortunately, they're often tough to find.

To make your own, go to a local sporting goods store or bowling pro shop and buy a small package of powdered rosin. Mix 8 tablespoons of powdered rosin with a pint (16 ounces)of denatured alcohol and stir thoroughly until dissolved.

Drop in your nails and slosh them around a bit to coat them with the solution. Use a magnet to remove them from the solution (or pour or scoop them out). Then, spread them out onto a pile of old newspapers or rags and allow them to dry before use.

CAUTION: DO YOUR MIXING AND COATING OUTDOORS
IN A WELL-VENTILATED AREA THAT'S AWAY FROM ANY
OPEN FLAMES.

Gluing / assembly / fastening

Clamping cauls that won't stick.

It's often a good idea to use wooden cauls (small, scrap blocks) between the jaws of your clamps and the surfaces they will grip to prevent marring. However, if you're not careful, some "stray" glue could permanently fasten the cauls to your surface during assembly. Here are four ways to prevent this from happening: 1) use wooden cauls that have a polyurethane or other glossy finish on their surfaces 2) use 1/4" or thicker plastic pieces as cauls 3) place a piece of waxed paper between your caul and your work piece 4) wrap your caul in ordinary plastic kitchen wrap before use.

Gluing / assembly / fastening

Another "mashless" brad holder

Use a fine toothcomb to hold your brads while driving. Just slip the brad between the comb teeth, move it into position and whack fearlessly away with your hammer!

Inexpensive beeswax

Woodworking stores and special shops can often charge a fortune for the beeswax you use to lubricate wood screws, drawer glides, etc. Instead, visit your local home centre and purchase a wax toilet bowl seal. They're usually made of beeswax and a heckuva lot cheaper than the specialty stuff !

Finishing

Work piece holder

To hold your work piece off the bench surface during finishing and drying, try driving 4-penny finishing nails through small, 2" square by 1/4" to 1/2" thick blocks of wood until their heads are flush with the surface. Then, turn them over on your bench top and use them as "feet" to support your projects, suspended above your bench surface during finishing.

Gluing / assembly / fastening

Ready-made door shims

The next time you're making cabinets with flush-fitting doors and need some shims to hold them at a uniform clearance when positioning hinges, try using some "coin of the realm". In particular, nickels, quarters, dimes or pennies.

They're carefully minted to be of a uniform thickness and chances are, you already have some handy in your pocket or piggy bank !

Layout & Measuring

Marking Large Diameter Curves Or Arcs

Sometimes, it can be difficult to mark a large diameter curve or arc near the long edge a narrow board -- since there's no place (on the same board) where you can centre a string or compass. In those cases, an ordinary sash chain (or other small-linked chain) can be used. Here's how: Drive a nail or brad into the face of your stock at either end of your desired curve. Slip a chain link over the brads on either end and stand your board on edge so gravity will cause your chain to droop. Adjust your chain by changing the link on either end, allowing your arc to get larger or smaller. Once your desired arc is attained, mark a dot on your stock at each link or two. Remove the chain and your brads, then connect the dots.

Using A Router To Joint The Edges Of Long Boards

If you're joining a series of long boards together that may be too cumbersome to handle on a short-bet jointer, try using your hand-held router and a 1/4" straight bit. Start by laying all of your boards face down on your bench top or the floor in their proper orientation.
Leaving about 3/16" between each pair of boards, screw a wooden cleat across the backside of all boards, connecting them together at each end.

Turn your boards back over so they're face up and clamp a straightedge to them and adjust it so that when your router base rides against it, your 1/4" bit lines up with the first of your 3/16" wide spaces.

Turn on your router and make your cut, guiding your router base against the straightedge, cutting a clean, straight edge on two opposing boards simultaneously.

Reposition your straightedge and repeat this process at the spaces between each pair of boards.

Since each pair of mating boards is jointed at the same time, they'll fit together perfectly every time...even if your straightedge isn't perfectly straight.

Jointing & Joinery

"Shrinking" Dowels or Biscuits That Fit Too Tightly

The next time you're having trouble getting a biscuit or dowel to slip into its intended

pocket or hole, don't reach for the sandpaper.
Although this method works great if you only have one or two biscuits or dowels, it can be very time-consuming when you have a lot of them.
When you find yourself in this situation, just "cook" your biscuits or dowels in the microwave for a few minutes. Chances are, they have enough residual moisture in them that the heat will shrink them enough that they'll slip right into place with little or no trouble.

Avoid Marring Work piece Surfaces

Even in the most well maintained shops, rough workbench surfaces (and metal filings or shavings) can often create dents, scratches and other blemishes on the underside of work pieces as they're being worked. To avoid this, it's always a good idea to cover your bench surface with sheets of newspaper or brown Kraft or butcher's wrapping paper before getting started. You might even look for an antique paper dispenser/cutter at a flea market and mount it on the side of your bench end so you always have a supply of paper for the job.

Router & Router Tables

Two Reasons NOT To Allow Router Bits To Bottom-Out In The Collet

First, bottomed-out bits will almost always make direct contact with the shaft of your router's motor...transferring the heat created by cutting directly to your motor's shaft. This will tend to shorten the lift of your router motor.

Second, if a bottomed-out bit seizes in the collet (which frequently happens), you'll have to PULL it out with pliers, which can be difficult. If your bit isn't bottomed-out, you can tap it with a piece of wood, freeing it from the collet much more easily.

Stopping Work piece Slippage When Crosscutting Or Cutting Mitres

Making an accurate crosscut or mitre cut can be difficult if your work piece is slipping
against the face of your mitre gauge during the cut. If you have a clampdown safety grip, this will solve the problem in most cases.
But, what if your work piece is too thick to be gripped by such a device?

In these cases, it's a good idea to glue or double-stick tape a piece of sandpaper to the face of your gauge to prevent this slippage. In fact, there are even special, non-slip strips that have been made especially
for this job. The additional accuracy provided by this simple approach is especially helpful when cutting mitres.

Lathe / Turning

Smooth Sanding Lathe Turnings

Most turners smooth their spindle turnings on the lathe with sandpaper or steel wool. It just makes more sense to do it this way.
However, unless you do it properly, you'll still have protruding wood fibres or "whiskers" when you've finished.
The secret is to smooth your turning once in the same direction. Then, turn your spindle around in the lathe, end-for-end (or reverse your lathe) and smooth it again while it's turning in the opposite direction.
By following this procedure, these protruding fibres will be eliminated completely.

Clamps / Clamping

Giant, Make-It-Yourself "Clothespin" Clamps

Picture how a wooden clothespin is made.
Two pieces of wood with semi-circular cutouts that pivot on the "barrel" of a spring.
Now, imagine how you could duplicate this design to make some handy clamps. For example, start with a piece of hardwood stock, 3/4" thick by 2" wide x 12" long. Lay your stock on the bench top and drill a 1/2" hole through the 3/4" thickness, centred, 1" in from each side and about 4" from one end.

Next, rip your 2" wide piece in half from end-to-end, cutting through the centre of your 1/2" hole. This will leave a semi-circular notch in each of your two jaw pieces.

Cut a piece of 3/4" diameter dowel rod to a length of 3/4". Position your dowel rod in the semi-circular notches between the two jaw pieces to create a fulcrum point. Wrap a large rubber band around the short, clamping ends to apply pressure. Simple.

Three Ways To Improve The "Glide" Of Machine Table Surfaces

1: Coat the table surfaces with paste-type furniture wax

2: Rub non-medicated talcum power into table surfaces with a cloth

3: Sprinkle cornstarch on table surfaces with a saltshaker.

Jointer & Thickness Planer

Eliminating Jointer/Planer Tear-Out

If you're experiencing tear-outs when jointing or planing cross-grained woods, here's a trick worth remembering. Before making your pass over the knives, use a cloth or sponge to apply a light coat of water, raising the wood grain slightly. Let your water soak in for a minute or two, then make a light 1/32"

or less pass across the machine. If you're still getting some tear-out, repeat the process and allow the water to soak in for a little longer before trying again.

Gluing, Assembly & Fastening

Removing Stubborn Screws

Removing a stuck wood screw without damaging the head or breaking the screw off inside its hole can, at times, be difficult. A well-known "old-timer's" trick for making a simple task out of this otherwise difficult job is to first heat the head of the screw with a soldering iron. In most cases, it will then back out easily with little or no problem.

Layout and Measuring

An easy way to measure the distance between inside corners

The next time you need to measure the distance between two inside corners, try this trick.
First, measure-off an even number of inches from one corner towards the centre of your area and make a mark. It makes no difference how far you measure...1", 8", 18", 35", etc. Then, measure from the opposing corner to your mark and add the distance of your first measurement.

Sanding

Make-it-yourself round-nose sander

Sometimes, you need a hemispherical-shaped sander for getting into rounded areas of a project. This one can be made quite easily with a 3-1/2" long by 3/8" diameter carriage bolt, a couple of nuts and washers, a 1/2" thick wooden disc, a child's sponge rubber-filled ball cut in half and a piece of lightweight sandpaper cut into a disc with pie-shaped cuts made around the edges.
Make the wooden disc the same diameter as the diameter of your ball. Drill a 3/8" hole in the centre and attach the 3/8" bolt to the disc with the washers & nuts. Cut off the bolt head. Next, use hot melt glue to bond the hemispherical ball to the disc and allow to dry. Stretch your sandpaper over the ball with the pie-shaped cuts overlapping. Affix it to the edges of the wooden disc with staples or a hose clamp. Chuck the end of the 3/8" bolt into your portable drill or drill press and go to work.

Bandsaw

Super-smooth resawing cuts

If you're trying to resaw thin strips of wood from not-too-thick stock (up to 3" or so) with a 1/4" to 3/8" wide bandsaw blade and find that you're getting rough cut surfaces...your problem is more than likely caused by the "set" in your blade's teeth. You can solve this problem with the blade you have by squeezing the "set" out of your blade's teeth using a set of smooth-jawed pliers or in the smooth, metal jaws of a machinist's vice. By eliminating the "set", you'll have to feed your stock through the cut more slowly, but your final results will be smoother.

Finishing

Two work piece-holders for finishing operations

1: For long, slender work pieces such as legs, etc., drive an open-ended screw hook into one end of your project and use a wire or string to hang it from the ceiling joist from a swivel-type plant hanger.
2: For flat work pieces, make long, T-shaped supports by cutting a rabbet down both sides, along one edge of a 12" to 18" long piece of scrap wood...leaving a protruding "tongue" down its length. Position this tongue against the edge of the piece to be finished and attach it temporarily with a couple of brads.
These supports will act as "legs" to hold the surface of the piece to be finished off the surface of your bench top during finishing.
Then, just flip your work piece over to finish the opposite side.

Miscellaneous Tips

Router bit, shaper cutter or moulding knife makes custom-shaped "hand scraper"

If you've just used your router, shaper or moulder to cut a profile in a work piece but aren't quite satisfied with the smoothness of your final cut, remove the bit or cutter from your power tool and use it as a profiled "hand scraper" to smooth-out your cut.

Clamping

Sandbag veneer press

When you need to apply thin veneer to a project surface, you can often hold it in position while your glue sets up by placing pillowcases filled with (dry) sand on top of the veneer.

Miscellaneous Tips

Attaining wrinkle-free felt drawer/box bottoms

Start by cutting a piece of cardboard to the bottom dimensions, less about 1/32". Lay a piece of felt on your bench top with the sized cardboard on top, positioned in one corner.
Be sure your felt is large enough to extend about 1/2" beyond the two corner edges. Cut the other two edges to the same 1/2" overlap with a SHARP artist's utility knife and straightedge.

Next, cut a 45-degree notch out of the felt in each corner. Spread a strip of quick setting craft-type glue around the edges of the cardboard and wrap your felt around and into the glue strip, pulling all the wrinkles out as you go. Don't pull too tightly or you'll "bow" the bottom.

Once everything's set up properly, apply a dab or two of glue to the backside of your cardboard and drop it into position in your drawer or box bottom.

Sanders

Cotter-pin sander/polisher

The next time you need to sand the inside of a hole or a small radius, try this trick. Slip a piece of sandpaper or steel wool through the two halves of a large cotter pin (at the rounded end) so the abrasive extends about 1" beyond
each side of the pin. Chuck the pin into your portable drill or drill press and go to work.

Jointer & Thickness Planer

Clean boards save knives

Dirt and grit on the surfaces of boards can dull planer or jointer knives quickly. Before planning or jointing old or soiled boards, clean their surfaces thoroughly. Wipe dust, mud or soil off surfaces with a damp cloth and allow to dry. If you suspect embedded grit such as sand or stones, wire brush all surfaces prior to planning or jointing.

Radial Arm Saws

Matching kerfs make cleaner cuts

The saw kerf in the surface of a radial arm saw table controls the smoothness of the cut you make. Over time, this kerf keeps getting wider and wider, thus providing less back-up for your work piece and more splintering on each cut. You can solve this problem by filling the kerf with epoxy-based wood filler or auto body filler. Allow

the filler to dry and pass your saw's blade through it slowly, making a new kerf.

Sanders

Quicker replacement of palm/pad sander sheets

Cut a sheet of plywood that's the same overall size and thickness as the pad on your sander.
Wrap your new sheet of sandpaper around the block and crease both ends of he paper nicely over the block before installing it on your sander.

Finishing

Applying a finish to the inside of small, hollow bowls or vases

Instead of struggling with a tiny brush that will reach inside your vessel, try blowing it out thoroughly to remove all dust and chips.
Then, pour some finish into the vessel, slosh it around a bit to coat the sides evenly, and pour the extra back into your container of finish.

Gluing, Assembly & Fastening

Router squeeze-out removal

The next time you're building a project with lots of assembly...and lots of potential glue squeeze-out, try this trick. Attach two 1" wide strips of equal thickness clear plastic or Lexan to opposing sides of your hand-held router base with double-stick carpet tape. Insert a 3/8" or 1/2" straight bit into your router, adjust the depth-of cut so your bit barely touches the wood surface, and run it across the squeeze-out areas, removing it completely.

Sheet Goods

Splinter-free cuts on plywood

To prevent splintering when cutting plywood on a table saw, place the "god" side of the plywood up on the table. Set your saw blade to make a cut about 1/8" deep on the underside and make your first pass. Re-set your blade to cut through the plywood, protruding about 1/4" above the surface and make the second and final pass.

Picture Framing

Saw table picture frame clamp

If you need a clamp for a small picture frame and don't have one handy, use your table saw.
First, unplug your saw. Drop a 3" high piece of stock into your mitre gauge slot (usually, these slots are 3/4" wide, so use 3/4" thick stock). Lower your saw blade below the table surface, cover your tabletop with waxed paper (to keep the glue off)

and place your frame between this protruding piece of stock and your rip fence. Slide the fence in toward the protruding stock until it touches the ends of your frame pieces. Apply glue to the corner joints and drop the opposing two pieces into position. Apply pressure across these opposing pieces with bar clamps and allow your glue to set up.

Cutting & Sizing

Truing the edges of irregular boards

Often, we get boards where neither edge is straight and true...making it difficult to rip to an accurate and consistent width. You can solve this problem by first attaching a known straight-edged piece wood to the top surface of your stock near one edge with a piece of double-stick carpet tape. Use a hand screw to apply momentary pressure at various points along the taped edge to assure good adhesion.
Remove the hand screw and guide the straight-edged piece against your saw's rip fence to true up the opposing edge. Remove the
taped-on strip, flip your stock over and rip the opposing edge straight and true.

Gluing, Assembly, Fastening

Spreading glue over expansive surfaces

The next time you have a lot of wood glue to spread over a large surface, try using a pad-style painter with a sponge back and short, polyester bristles. Most are about 4" x 6" and wash out quickly with water when the job is finished (providing you're using water soluble glue).

Layout & Measuring

Dividing the width of a board into
equal parts

To mark-out equal widths on a board that's not easily divisible into equal parts, lay a ruler diagonally across the board from one edge to another and make marks on the board surface at each even inch line.

For example, if your board is 7-1/4" wide and you need nine equal widths, position one end of your ruler at the board edge on the ruler's "0" mark...and the other end of the ruler at the opposite board edge on the ruler's "9" mark. Then, simple make a mark at each inch-line.

Restoration

Repairing blistered veneer surfaces

To repair a veneer blister, use an artist's knife or utility knife to cut a slit along the length of the blister. Press the veneer down on one side of the blister and squirt glue under the raised side. Press this side down and remove any glue squeeze-out. Raise the other side and repeat the process.

Lay a piece of waxed paper over the repaired area, then a small scrap wood block. Clamp the block over the repair and allow to dry. If you can't get a clamp over the spot, lay a heavy weight on top of your scrap block.

When it's dried, remove the block and waxed paper, sand the surface and finish.

Miscellaneous Tips

Determining ideal heights for benchtops, desktops and wall shelves

Finding the right heights for different types of furniture can be tricky. Here's how to make the right determination:

Desktops & table tops should be 4" above your knee when seated.
For workbenches, stand 18" away from a wall...pivot your straight arm toward the wall with your fingers outstretched. The point where your fingertips touch the wall is the ideal benchtop height for you.
Shelves & cupboards should be attached to the wall at least 1' above this height.

Shop Set-Up

Garden hose tool holders

Short pieces of an old garden hose make ideal "sheaths" for small chisels, screwdrivers and other round or flat tools. Just use two screws to fasten the bottoms of your hose pieces to a board that's attached to the wall with the open (top) ends toward the ceiling. Drop the tip of your tools into the open ends of the hoses.

Gluing, Assembly, Fastening

Gluing joints with two-part epoxy resins

When using two-part epoxy resins to assemble a large number of joints on a project, the glue can often set-up before you manage to get all of the joints put together. Here's a trick to avoid that. Apply the resin to one-half of each joint and the hardener to the other half. This way, the glue won't be mixed until you assemble the joints together...giving you plenty of "open time".

Miscellaneous Tips

Another table saw glide aid

Here's another great way to keep workpieces gliding smoothly across table saws and other machine surfaces. Purchase a set of large diameter, aluminum salt/pepper shakers, like the ones "Mom" used near the stove. Fill them with cornstarch and place them near your machines. When a workpiece seems to be dragging, give the table surface a quick sprinkle and watch how easily your stock glides!

Layout & Measuring

Labeling Parts For Assembly

Instead of labeling project components with unsightly pen, marker or pencil marks that you'll just have to remove later, try using the small, removable "sticky-note" sheets that are available at office supply stores. They're inexpensive and won't leave a mess that you'll have to clean up.

Miscellaneous Tips

Keeping Your MARK V Allen Wrench Handy

As all Shopsmith MARK V owners know, most tool changeovers and adjustments can be made with a single tool...your 5/32" Allen Wrench. To be sure it's handy when you need it most, wrap a strip of flexible magnetic tape around the front lower way tube of your MARK V. This will make the perfect "holster" for your Allen Wrench !

Machine Maintenance

Spray "Lubricants" Really Aren't...

It's a common myth that spray "lubricants" such as WD-40 are "the cat's meow" for quick, easy lubrication of machinery, etc. In reality, they're not lubricants at all! Their cans typically advertise that they "stop squeaks", "clean", "protect", "displace moisture" and "loosen parts" and say nothing about lubrication properties. That's because they're actually penetrating oils, formulated to loosen rust and dissolve grease. In fact, using these to lubricate moving parts will actually remove all the oil and grease, leaving your parts with no lubrication whatsoever!

Gluing, Assembly, Fastening

Inexpensive Wooden Glue Spreaders

Spreading glue on board edges can be both messy and time-consuming without the proper "tools".
Using your fingers will work...but having glue on your fingers during assembly can put glue in places where you really don't want it.
Using a small brush is another solution...but when you're finished, you'll have to clean the glue out of your brush to be sure it's usable the next time you need it. Small, wooden, popsicle-type sticks make the perfect alternative. Available at most craft stores, they're the perfect size for most edge-gluing applications and you can throw them away when the job's done. What could be more practical?

Cabinetmaking Tips

Disguising Upright Bookcase Shelf Supports

Long expanses of books on shelves can easily get heavy enough to cause unsightly sagging over time. This problem can, of course, be avoided by positioning upright

supports between the shelves. However, these supports can distract from the appearance of your shelves. To solve this problem, buy some inexpensive used books that are the same height as the distance between your shelves. Remove the pages of the books, wrap their covers around the upright supports and glue them into position, rendering your supports "invisible".

Jointing & Joinery

Jointing The Edges Of Small Parts

Some parts are just too small to joint safely on machinery. In these cases, try grasping the handle of a Jack, Jointer or Smoothing plane in the jaws of your bench vise (in an inverted position). Then, simply grasp your small part and run it over your hand plane's blade.