

Router Bit Maintenance

The best way to prolong the life of a router bit is to keep it clean. And what you need to do varies with the type of bit. (Note: Sharpening is important too, but I'll take a look at that in a later tip.)

NO BEARINGS: To clean bits without bearings, first blow off any dust. Then remove any resin that has built up. (Resin places a drag on the bit, which can cause it to overheat and burn.)

Resin removers are commonly available where woodworking products are sold. It's the same stuff you use to clean your saw blades. Some people like to use oven cleaner (beware of the fumes).

BITS WITH BEARINGS: To clean bits with bearings, first, remove the bearing. Then clean the bit as you did with non-bearing bits.

It's important to remove the bearings because even though router bearings are "sealed," resin remover can sneak in and dissolve the bearing grease. If this were to happen, you would be faced with the problem of trying to lubricate a sealed bearing.

Despite the claims of some bearing grease sellers, we've never had much luck with this. Once that grease is gone, just go buy a new bearing.

BIT SHANKS: One last thing. Periodically inspect the shanks of your router bits for rust or burrs. Either of these can be removed quickly with steel wool. Left on, they can interfere with your ability to properly tighten the bit in the collet.