

Woodcarving Chisel Sharpening Guide

Woodcarving tools are sharpened on both sides of the cutting edge (unlike standard chisels) and regular sharpening on an oilstone, a diamond whetstone, or a leather strop, keeps tools sharp thereby making carving easier, and ensuring a cleaner cut.

There are three categories for consideration when sharpening: **Gouges, Chisels & Parting Tools.**

Gouges

1. Apply thin lubricating oil onto an ordinary fine-textured oilstone
2. Working at right angles to the stone, hone the outer bevel at the same angle as the original ground bevel.
3. Raise the handle slightly and work towards the cutting edge
4. For a curved gouge, twist it as you move it along the stone (Fig.1). Avoid twisting too much as this can 'round over' the corners.
5. Continue honing until the line of light shown in (Fig.2) disappears.
6. A smaller, inner bevel is formed at about the same angle as the large outer bevel, by holding the gouge and rubbing it with an oiled slipstone (Fig.3). This inner bevel makes cutting easier and lifts the tool, preventing it from digging in.
7. Once the outer bevel is properly formed, most honing should be concentrated on the inner surface.
8. To remove the burr at the edge: Strop the gouge on a piece of soft leather dressed with crocus powder and oil. (NB: Crocus powder, normally red ferrous oxide, is available either in block form or as prepared cloth. If you have trouble buying these, household abrasives are adequate substitutes. The edge of the gouge should be drawn backwards and twisted across the strop (Fig.4).
9. The folded strop should then be drawn down the inner bevel to complete the stropping (Fig.5).

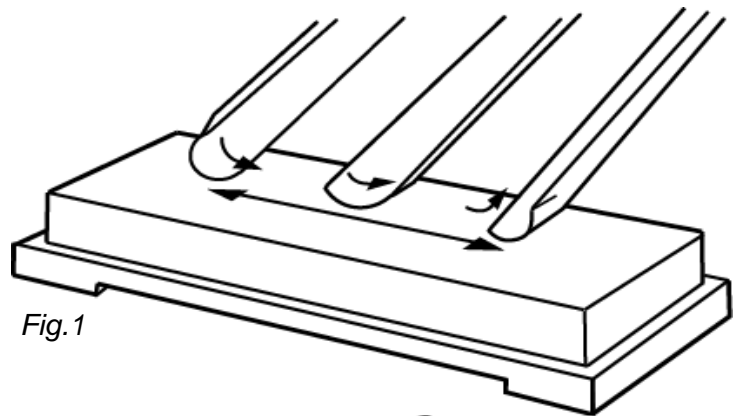


Fig.1

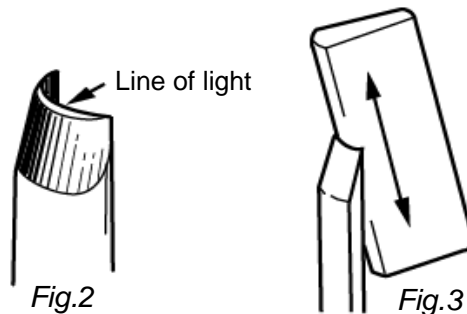


Fig.2

Fig.3

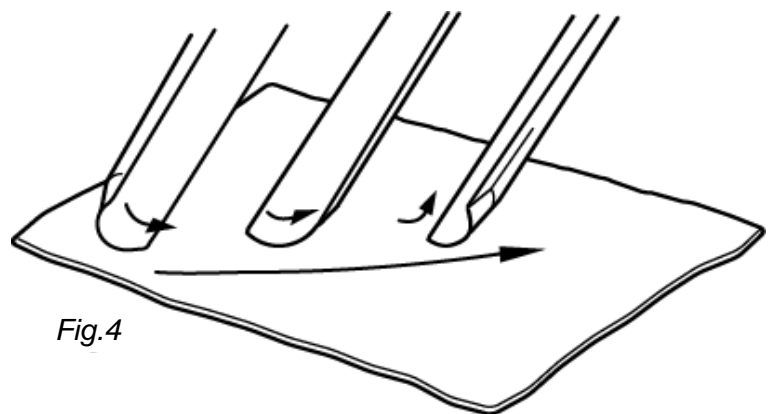


Fig.4

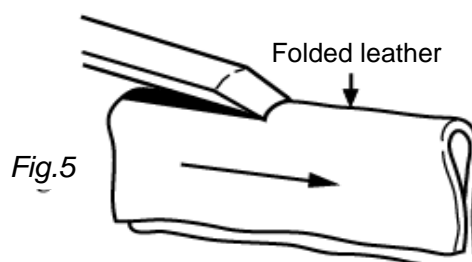
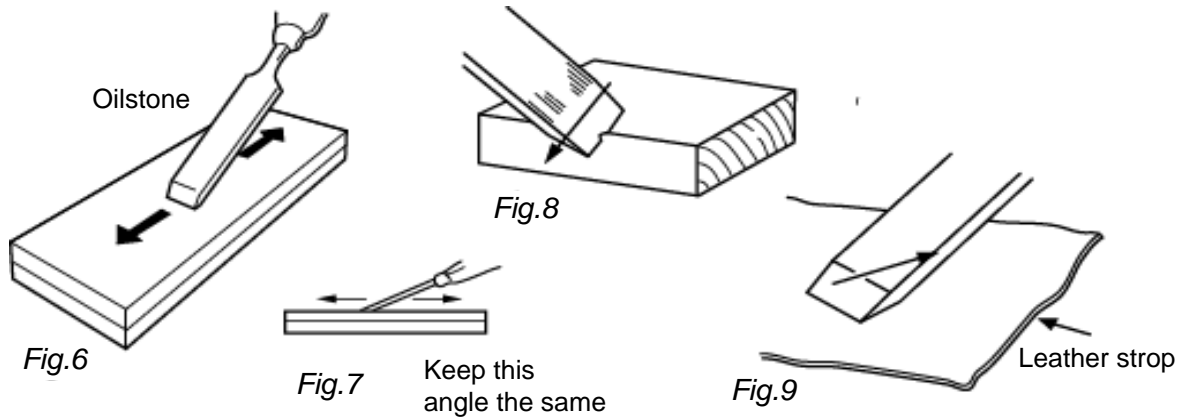


Fig.5

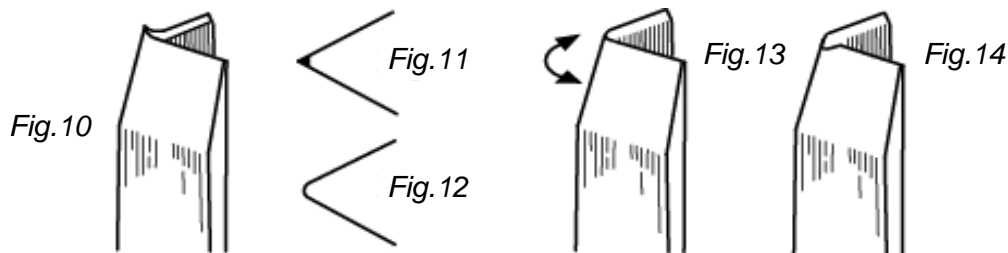


Chisels

Woodcarving chisels are either skew or square, and are bevelled on both sides. Both are sharpened using the same procedure:

1. Apply the blade on the oiled stone at the same angle as the original bevel.
2. Rub the edge along the length of the stone – always maintaining a constant angle (Fig.6 and 7).

3. Repeat the procedure for the remaining bevel.
4. After honing, remove the burr by drawing the edge across the corner of a wooden block. (Fig.8).
5. Finally, draw each bevel across the dressed strop. (Fig.9).



Parting Tools

Probably the trickiest of the three types of woodcarving tools to sharpen.

- The parting tool can sometimes develop a hook at the corner (Fig.10). This rounded, blunt area (Fig.11) appears after repeated use of the slipstone on the inside corner.
- To remedy this, take off the outer corner as in illustration (Fig.12).
- This leaves two chisel-like edges joined by a slight curve (Fig.13).

You may find that regular sharpening of a small parting tool causes a 'hook' to form on one edge and a 'hollow' in the other (Fig.14).

- To remedy this, hold the chisel vertically on the stone, and rub firmly until every part of the edge has been touched.
- The thickness of the 'line of light' will show which parts of the bevel need most attention. Sharp tools are essential for successful woodcarving – as are most of the techniques you'll need.

FAITHFULL TOOLS

Phoenix House,
3 White Lodge Business Estate,
Hall Road, Norwich, Norfolk,
NR4 6DG, United Kingdom

E-mail: enquiries@faithfulltools.com

www.fairhulltools.com