

PUTTING YOUR PLANE TO WORK

Because a shoulder plane is a specialty tool, a little extra instruction can help you make your first shavings. Here are some examples that show how you can put your new tool to good use.

First, sharpen the blade and adjust the cutting depth to the thinnest possible shaving (refer to the set up instructions on page 13 of issue 24). This step is more important with shoulder planes than bench planes because these tools see a lot of end- and cross-grain action. If the blade's dull or set too deeply, it won't make the cut.

Before you attempt to make any shavings, clamp your workpiece to your bench, or brace it against a bench dog or scrap of wood (as shown), so that it can't slip or spin in mid-stroke.

CLEANING UP RABBETS



PLANE A RABBET. Set the blade slightly proud of the plane side so that it will clean the inside corner. Begin your planing stroke with the blade off the work. Keeping the plane level, lightly press down on the front of the plane and begin pushing it forward. As the blade bites into the wood, put more pressure on the center of the tool. At the end of the cut, shift pressure to the back of the plane so that the plane doesn't tip.

TIP ALERT

If you run into tricky grain, try flipping the blade so that the bevel faces up. Doing this turns the plane into a scraper plane. The scraping action works regardless of grain direction, but can only be used for super-light cuts.

"Shop-Made Shoulder Plane"
Woodcraft Magazine,
Issue 24, Aug/Sept 2008



FINE-TUNING TENONS



PLANING A TENON CHEEK is the same as planing a rabbet, but you may need to take several passes to work up to the shoulder. Remember to set the blade so that it's flush on the side that will make contact with the shoulder of the tenon you're tuning. Shave equal amounts off each tenon cheek for the perfect fit.



TO PLANE A SHOULDER, rest the side against the tenon's cheek and shave the end grain. Because you're cutting tough end grain, thin shavings are important. To avoid break-out, stop 1/8" to 1/4" from the corner and then complete the cut from the opposite side.