



## Synopsis

Hand and Power Tools Work Best Together In today's world of more-power-is-better, it's easy to overlook the value of hand tools. What most woodworker's don't realize is that combining both hand and power tool worlds is the best way to produce the highest quality woodworking. In Hand Tool Essentials you'll learn how to choose and use hand tools for chopping, cutting, paring, sawing, marking, drilling and more. Many of the tools are familiar, but others will surprise you with their usefulness. Though they've been around for hundreds (or thousands) of years, these tools have gotten lost in the rush of the industrial revolution. Rediscovering the value of these tools in your woodworking will also give you a better understanding of how your power tools work. But this book is more than about how to use hand tools. It's about using hand tools in balance with power tools to save you time, provide a more pleasant woodworking experience and ultimately give you a better woodworking project.

## Book Information

Series: Popular Woodworking

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Popular Woodworking Books (June 6, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1558708154

ISBN-13: 978-1558708150

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.7 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (33 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #301,154 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Hand Tools](#) #449 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Woodworking > Projects](#) #1264 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Industrial, Manufacturing & Operational Systems](#)

## Customer Reviews

In summary, this is just a terrific book. Unlike the other reviewer, I did NOT contribute any articles to it, and hence can be considered unbiased. The book is actually a collection of articles, the primary emphasis of which is on the basics of tool preparation, and in particular on edge tools. I think this is appropriate since poorly set up and mis-sharpened tools are virtually impossible to work with. Thus,

mastering the basics of tool preparation is a pre-requisite to successful and enjoyable woodworking just as mastering the basics of "blocking and tackling" is necessary for a successful football team. The book typically offers different viewpoints by different authors -- numerous approaches to sharpening edge tools are covered, for example. Again, this seems appropriate since it gives the newcomer to the hobby a variety of different approaches with different entry-dollar requirements to choose from. I particularly liked the detailed instructions on how to make and use certain fairly basic tools---the article on drawboring, for example, was just superb. On top of all this, the book concludes with several really first-rate projects: an arts and crafts tool cabinet, a workbench, and a sawbench that I really like. I'm actually planning on building all three projects, and I can't remember when I last saw even a single published project that I wished to build. This is probably the best single book on hand tools you can buy. If you're just starting out, get this first---it'll save you lots of time and trouble. The more experienced woodworker will also find some very useful stuff in here. My only complaint is that I wish the book had had more material on saws and more material on tool making. But then it would be a different book, wouldn't it?

Knowing that this was basically just a collection of Popular Woodworking articles, I was prepared to be underwhelmed. Talk about disappointment! I HATE being wrong like this! In short, this is a truly impressive collection of information that looks more like a group of knowledgeable hand tool experts put together, rather than just articles grabbed and put together in a book form. The book is laid out in a logical way, starting with a "Why Handtools" section, going into sharpening (a must for any hand tool user), then saws, chisels, and the like. The last section are a couple of projects that blend hand tools and power tools well, and that will serve any workshop well for years to come. Honestly, the beautiful tool cabinet of Christopher Schwarz's is worth the cost of the book by itself! This is a must have for, I believe, any woodworker. There's no preaching about hand tool supremacy, nor any reference to "quaint" ideas of woodworking. Instead, this book offers the modern woodworker a glimpse of the realms where hand tools still excel, and how they can be incorporated into the modern workshop. At the same time, it shows how a hand tool only shop can still produce quality work equal to that of the powered shop.

This is a great reference book. While I learned a lot just browsing, it was most valuable when I wanted to reference a couple things and found that they were there and in sufficient detail to answer my questions. For me, there is possibly a little much on various forms of sharpening, but then that is a topic that seems to have as many ways as there are people to talk about it. I have a Stanley

cabinet scraper and I became convinced that they didn't work worth a hoot. Then, reading that section, I learned I had prepared the blade wrong, changed it, and feel like I got a new tool out of the deal. Great value

When I started woodworking one of my first purchases was a book on hand tools from the Fine Woodworking people. It was interesting, but not terribly useful. While I learned a lot about how chisels were forged and how to sharpen 17th Century spoonbill bits, there wasn't much on the basic skills I was looking to learn. This book was exactly what I needed back then. Popular Woodworking devotes more space to hand tool woodworking than any other woodworking magazine, mostly, I suspect, from the efforts of its former editor, the peripatetic Christopher Schwarz, a man devoted to hand tool use. The book starts out with the essential tools you need, how to buy them used, how to set up your bench, and then a full 65 pages devoted to how to sharpen planes, chisels, and drawknives, using a variety of methods. There are several articles on hand plane use, sawing, simple shop appliances like bench hooks and shooting boards, mortising, dovetails, and all the other basic skills and tools of the hand tool woodworker. There are also a host of plans for projects ranging from the very simple, like the aforementioned bench hook, to complicated- Schwarz's Craftsman-style tool cabinet. All are presented in detail, with clear photographs, measured drawings, and step-by-step instructions. None are beyond the beginner who takes time to practice each of the techniques taught along the way. I have a fair sized collection of woodworking books on my shelf, but I would say that this is one of the most useful and perhaps even necessary books for anyone getting started in hand woodworking.

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