

THE CUTTING EDGE

A periodic magazine that celebrates the activities of the Shed and its members

Volume 1 No. 20

Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed

Spring/Summer 2019

In Memory of Brian Hart

Brian joined the Shed on 10 June 2006. In the years prior to 2010 (before we moved to Sefton Road), when we were having deep discussions with the Council about proposed building extensions, Brian established himself as the Shed's "Statesman". He was the Membership Officer for many years. More recently, he became a great advocat for the Shed to become involved in assisting sufferers of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). He developed very thorough reports for the Shed from mid 2017 even though in poor health.

I have attempted to convey Brian's activities over the years of his membership and his unfailing support of the Shed, by delving into my photo archives:





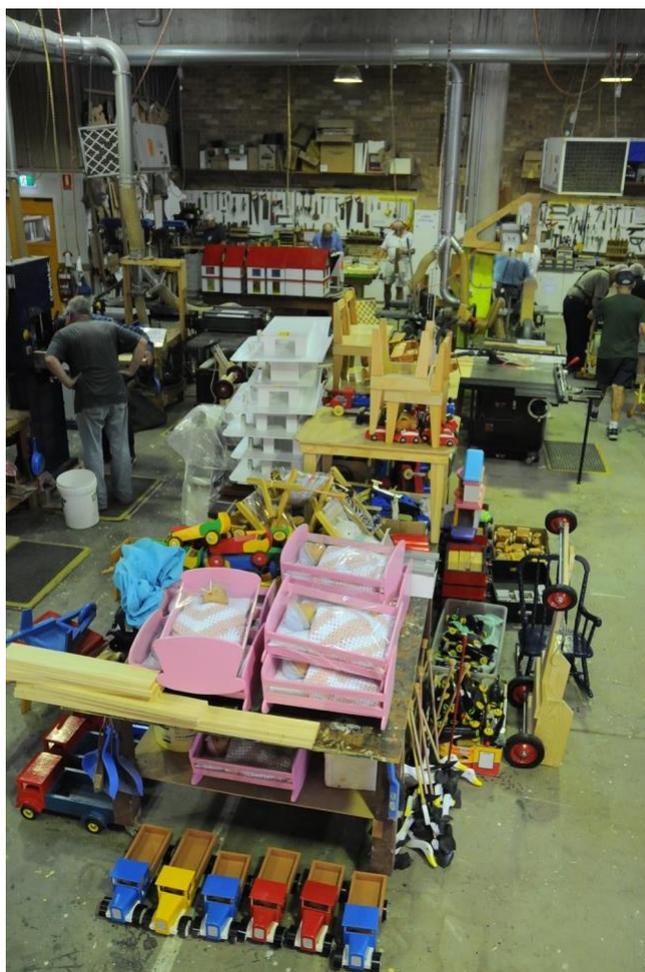


The Lead-up To Our **Christmas** Season:

1. The Culmination Of The **Toy Group's** 2019 Programme

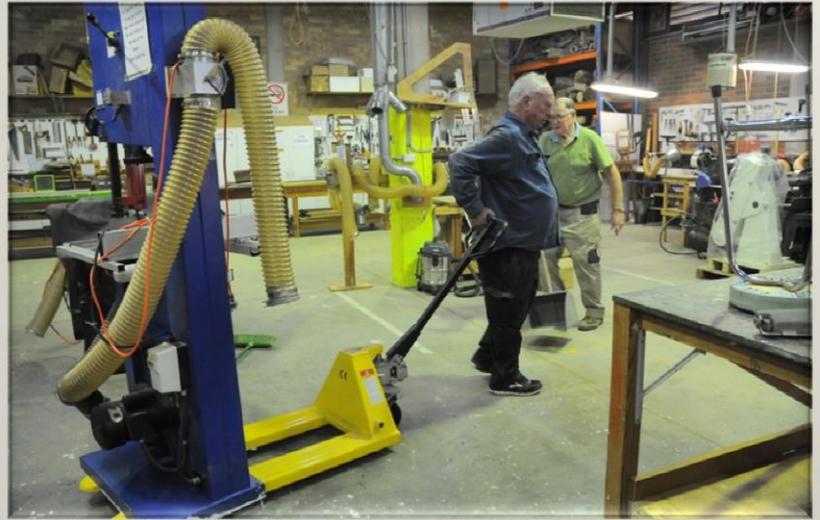
The Toy Group, led by Fred Blaauw, again excelled themselves with a great range of items that will delight the children and their parents who will surely appreciate traditional handmade wooden gifts at this time of the year.

These are some of the toys to be shared between our two charities (see the third section of this article).



2. Preparing the Shed

The hard physical work of moving the machines and benches was made easier this year by the purchase of two hydraulic trolleys. This allowed more time for the volunteers to give the Shed a thorough clean.



3. Our 2019 Christmas Party

We were very appreciative to again have Meesha Perera planning the catering for the party, despite being days away from the birth of her second boy. Our congratulations go to her and proud father Dimitri. Thanks also go to her able assistants who worked in the kitchen, husband Dimitri, Ivan and Colleen Bosnich. The catering was based on an estimate of 80 attendees which, as it turned out, was spot on. Thanks also to Ian Raper, Philip Hirshbein, Bob Carruthers, Colin Crispo, Ron Koutchavlis and all the helpers on the night.

As the following photos show, it was an enjoyable night with short speeches, great food and drink, lots of good company and a chance for spouses to see where we work and some of the items made for the year.

I think that feeling was summed up by this note to the Secretary from a member (who only joined recently):

“Hi John, just a short note to thank you, the committee members and volunteers for a most enjoyable Christmas Party on Friday evening. Suzanne and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and it gave me the opportunity to introduce her to a number of people helping me at the Shed and showing her what gets done there. Thanking you all again, kind regards, Steven and Suzanne Stanford.”



Speeches, presentations and drawing the raffle winner (congratulations Russel Pinch) plus having a good time was the agenda for the evening as the following photos show:







4. The Handover To **Wesley Mission**, One Of Our Charities

For many years, we have an organised Toy Group that produces hundreds of items solely to donate to our two charities, Wesley Mission and the Salvation Army. As usual, Wesley contacted us in advance to arrange the pick-up. This year it was 19 November. They are always very appreciative of the range and number of items displayed on and around our craft table, ready for them.

The following pictures tell the story:







Prue Ghali, Regional Services Coordinator, explained Wesley's role.

"Wesley Brighter Futures works with families with children aged between 0 – 8 years. We work with families who may be dealing with issues including mental health, alcohol/drug use, domestic violence and parenting challenges.

The presents we receive each year from the Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed are always very popular. The hand-made nature of the gifts provides a special, more personal touch for children who often receive few other gifts at Christmas time.

Once we pick up the toys, we distribute them across our three offices to ensure that each team receives a variety of toys. Staff then select toys that best suit their clients and take them out during the Christmas period to families."

On Christmas Eve, Prue sent us a further message;

"Hi Phil, I wanted to say thank you to the HWMS for all the hard work and time that went into the children's toys this year.

With your help we are able to provide some extra Christmas joy to our families every year, and we truly appreciate all the work you do over the year!

We wish you and the Men's Shed a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

Prue Ghali | Regional Services Coordinator, Wesley Mission Brighter Futures

In and Around the Shed



MY BUCKET LIST: THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

“bucket list n (2006): a list of things that one has not done before but wants to do before dying.”

The Trans-Siberian Railway has been high on my list for several years but the project never seemed to get, er, traction. My wife, Chris, and I spent the middle months of 2019 living near London and she was booked to fly home in mid-October. With no firm date (or airline ticket) for my own return to Australia motive, means and opportunity finally came together! My English brother-in-law quickly joined up and we decided that this was to be serious travel: London to Hong Kong, by train, non-stop, 10 days, 15,411 km, how hard can it be? We travelled in Mid-October outside the holiday peak period.

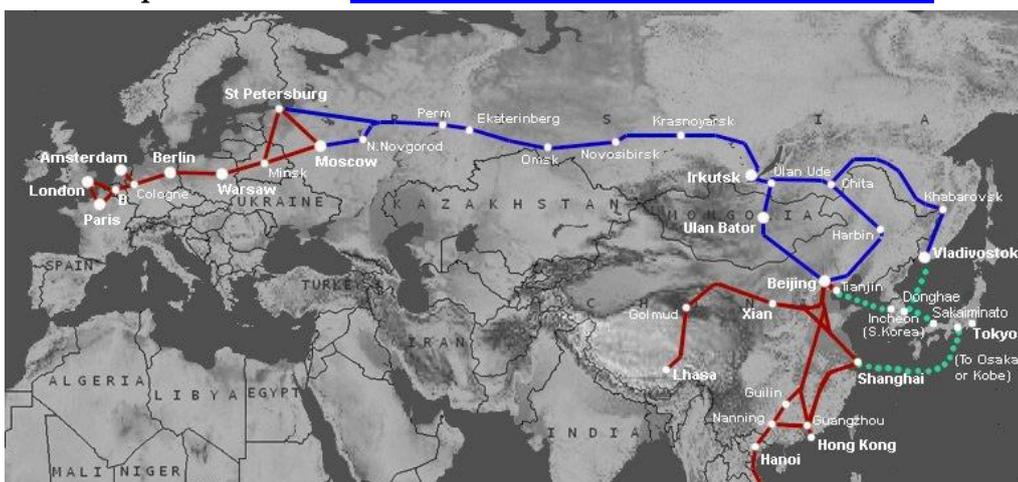
The Train



The first point to grasp is that *this is a working train* used by ordinary Russians to travel from city to city across the eastern provinces of the vast Russian Federation, a luxury tourist excursion it is not! Russian families tend to use the four-berth Kupe (second class) compartments piling adults, children, baggage, even caged pussy cats, into a space around 2.5W x 3L x 3H (metres) complete with massive and fragrant picnics. Long-distance and international travellers tend to be put together in SV (first class) carriages comprising nine two-berth compartments (same as a Kupe compartment,

just two beds instead of four), a reasonably clean toilet at both ends of the carriage and a compartment for the “provodnitsa”, the strict lady carriage attendant who collects tickets, allocates compartments and tends the wood-fueled samovar which provides constant hot water for your tea, coffee and pot noodles. Elsewhere on the train there is a pretty ordinary dining car offering a few basic dishes and, somewhere else, there is an on-board shower available for a small fee – see your provodnitsa! The train covers around 1,000km/day at a leisurely pace stopping at a city every few hours for 10-20 minutes to exchange passengers, change engines, add or subtract carriages and give you a chance to stretch your legs along the platform. The second point is that you have a choice of three routes and destinations branching out after you have past Irkutsk and nearby Lake Baikal in central Siberia:

See the superb website at <https://www.seat61.com/Trans-Siberian.htm>



1. The classic **Trans-Siberian** route through endless taiga forest and steppe to Vladivostok on the Pacific – 9,289,km and 6 full days. Not much to experience on the way or when you finally get there (I’m told) and only limited indirect airline services to Sydney via Seoul or Tokyo.

2. The popular **Trans-Mongolian** tourist route via Ulanbataar and the Gobi Desert to Beijing – 7,826 km in 5½ days taking in three distinct cultures, landscapes and languages. The best choice if you want to do short stays and tourist excursions along the way. Direct flights available Beijing-Sydney.

- The weekly **Trans-Manchurian** service from Moscow to Beijing via Chita, Harbin and eastern China departing late Saturday evenings – 8,988 km in 6½ days. The route less travelled. Most of your fellow passengers will be Russians or Chinese doing shorter hops. We chose this route to see as much of Russia and China as possible and added the high-speed train Beijing-Hong Kong express for fun. Again, plentiful direct flights Hong Kong-Sydney.

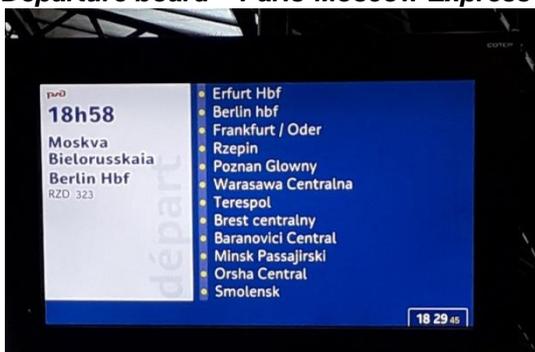
Thirdly, you will need immaculate documentation and appropriate visas for each country you visit – do not try to arrange this yourself, use a specialist travel agent (see “Travel Tips” later) who will save you a world of frustration! You are also entering the murky world of post-communist cultures so don’t expect a warm welcome from the FSB border guards, successors to the KGB or their equally grim colleagues in Belarus or northern China. Excessively-thorough passport checks, baggage searches and detailed compartment inspections (including sniffer dogs) are the norm at every border crossing along the way once you leave the EU customs area at the eastern Polish border.

Our Itinerary

Overview: Catch the hourly London-Paris Eurostar service under the English Channel (348 km). The Paris-Moscow Express (3,635 km) every Thursday evening arrives in Moscow around lunchtime on Saturday, allowing an afternoon of sight-seeing before catching the weekly late evening train to China via Manchuria. Arriving in Beijing (8,988 km) early the *following* Saturday, there is just time to cross town to board the mid-morning high-speed bullet train to Hong Kong – 2,440 km in 9 hours with stops, cruising at 306 kph! This is how it works:

- Thursday – London St Pancras International on Eurostar mid-morning, arrive Paris mid-afternoon. Depart early evening on the Paris-Moscow Express via Strasbourg and then into Germany overnight.

Departure board – Paris-Moscow Express



- Friday – Berlin for breakfast, then into Poland. Warsaw by mid-afternoon, leave the EU area and cross into Belarus early evening. Belarus border checks 2½ hours and change carriage bogeys from European standard gauge (1,435 mm/4ft 8½ in) to the wider Russian five foot gauge (1,520 mm/5ft). Better have your Belarus Transit Visa in order, one of our travelling companions did not and spent the night in the cells! Cross Belarus during the night and enter western Russia.

- Saturday – Arrive Moscow late morning, take a day room at a hotel near the departure station, quick shower, lunch, sightseeing, nap, another shower, dinner and depart late evening on the Trans-Manchurian “Vostok” Express for China.

Yaroslavskya Station - Moscow terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway



- Sunday – 6 stops including the big industrial cities of Kirov and Perm in the Ural “mountains”, hills really. scenery mostly taiga birch forest.

Real Russia 1: The Taiga – birch forest for hours!



5. Monday – 5 stops including Yekaterinburg (3.00 am!) where Tsar Nicholas and his family were killed by the Bolsheviks and Omsk, another big drab industrial city. Cross from Europe into Asia at around 1,800 km from Moscow and into Siberia at 2,200 km. We have moved from Autumn in Moscow to early Winter in Siberia, ice on the river margins.

Real Russia 2: another big drab industrial city

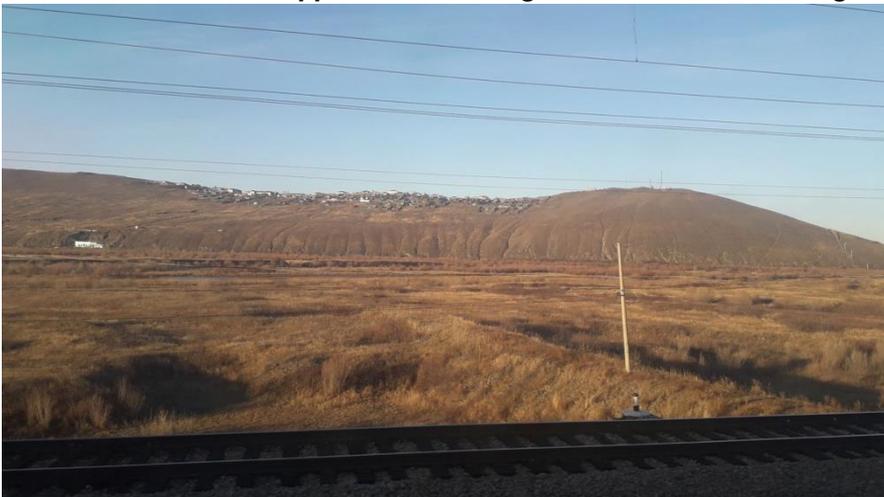


6. Tuesday – 12 stops ranging from 34 minutes down to just 1 minute. Really getting into it now, more taiga forest, most of the industrial city names new to me except for Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk.

7. Wednesday – 8 stops, Irkutsk and scenic Lake Baikal (much more to see here for another time). Past snow-capped mountains and out onto endless grassy steppe.

8. Thursday – 6 stops in the morning at increasingly derelict and depressing towns arriving at the chilly Russian border town of Zabaikalsk, 5 hours stop here (!). Moved off the train which is taken away to have the bogies changed to Chinese standard gauge. Left on the almost deserted platform for 3 hours with no train, no belongings, in the middle of nowhere! The last of the Russians get off here and the sensible local Chinese all depart by bus across the border to avoid the wait. Cross from dismal decaying eastern Russia into brightly-lit modern China early evening for yet another 5 hours of border checks and searches. There are now only 6 passengers left on the entire train

Real Russia 3: The Steppe of Outer Mongolia – homeland of Gengis Khan



9. Friday – East across the steppes of Inner Mongolia to Harbin by lunchtime, then south through booming eastern China for the rest of the day and night. Extraordinary.

China: Highrise apartment blocks to the horizon in yet another huge Chinese city



Saturday – arrive smoggy Beijing 6 am, depart 10 am on train G79, the high-speed service to Hong Kong, arriving early evening on schedule.

Beijing East Railway Station - terminus of the Trans-Manchurian Express.



Job done, 15,411 km in 10 days, by rail, across Europe, Asia and the English Channel!

Travel Tips

Planning – The journey itself is very simple but it takes a lot of planning and research to get it right. We mainly used:

Lonely Planet’s guidebook “Trans-Siberian Railway” 6th Ed, 2018, ISBN 978-1-78657-459-6

The excellent “Man in Seat 61” website <https://www.seat61.com/Trans-Siberian.htm>

Bookings and visas - Have your visa applications and main ticket bookings handled by a travel agent specializing in Russia and China - We used <https://realrussia.co.uk/> and their office in London for arrangements on the entire Paris-Beijing leg. This saved us hours of frustration trying to do it ourselves and is well worth the surcharge involved. Check Google for an equivalent operator in Sydney. We booked London-Paris and Beijing-Hong Kong online without problems.

Visas again – Very important indeed, huge attention is paid to passports and visas which are inspected minutely by grim border guards, one even counted all the pages in my passport twice. Allow plenty of time for the visa applications to go through, at least three months! This trip required a passport valid for the travel dates plus at least 6 months before expiry, a transit visa for Belarus, tourist visas for Russia

and China (PRC), but curiously not for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for UK and Australian passport holders. You will also need to attend a Russian consulate for finger-printing and interview prior to issue of your visa.

Booze – take plenty! A G&T is very pleasant before lunch as you watch the birch forest go by. An impromptu drinks party in your compartment at dusk early in the journey (and in fact every evening before dinner!) helps you to get to know the other international travellers in your carriage and their extraordinary stories. This is commonly reported as one of the highlights of the trip! We ran out of gin by day 7, scotch by day 8 and were reduced to sipping Belarus horseradish liquor on day 9!

Food - The samovar in the carriage provides hot water on demand so a tucker box of basics like teas, coffee and instant noodles is essential to supplement the basic dishes served in the dining car. A supply of savoury delicacies is also advisable: some cheeses, salami and biscuits provide a pleasant lunch although a refrigerator is not a feature of Russian trains. Good quality fruit cake, chocolates and biscuits can be traded with other travellers and the train staff for whatever they are carrying. Don't forget to take your own mug, plate and cutlery.

So that is the Trans-Siberian Railway, in my opinion, still one of the great rail journeys of the world. It takes a lot of planning, takes up a lot of time and costs about the same as the equivalent business class flight – I know this because, once my wife found out what I had spent on it, she upgraded herself from cattle to business class for her flight back to Sydney!

Roger Thornback

(Roger joined the Shed in January 2019. He is a retired Civil Engineer)

The Australian Men's Shed Association

The Shed is a member of AMSA (together with a number of other Sheds in NSW and other States), a federal government funded organisation whose objectives are to encourage the health and wellbeing of members in a social environment.

We receive the following documents each year, as our membership is renewed.

Unlike AMSA, we do not limit our membership to adult males but welcome both genders, young and old.



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the
Public Service and Cabinet

To men's sheds across Australia

With Christmas and New Year almost upon us, I would like to express my support and thanks to everyone involved in the Men's Sheds movement.

There are now more than 1,000 men's sheds across the nation. The movement keeps growing because it's providing something that, in today's high pressure world, many men cannot find in other parts of their lives.

That is, a supportive community where they are accepted for who they are, whatever their background or current circumstances. Where they can take part in work or play, or just hang out. Where there are no demands and no such thing as failure.

At any time of the year, men's sheds are an antidote to isolation and depression. They support mental health and wellbeing, and spread information and awareness about physical and mental health issues.

This year, with the devastating drought across much of eastern Australia, sheds are even more important to men on the land or in rural communities. And while the festive season can be full of joy, it can also be hard for those who are not in a fortunate position.

The Australian Government fully recognises the positive impact of men's sheds. We continue to provide funding for equipment and improvements through our National Shed Development Programme, which has been increased to \$1 million a year until 30 June 2023.

We are also implementing our \$2 million plan to ensure that defibrillators are available at every men's shed. A survey of sheds to determine their needs has been completed and defibrillators will start to be distributed in the new year, together with training in their use.

Happy Christmas and New Year to you all.

Greg Hunt



Australian Men's Shed Association
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed

AMSA Member Number AMSA100165

Member since 1 December 2010

Issue Date 26 November 2019

The Australian Men's Shed Association recognises a Men's Shed as a community based, non-profit, non-commercial organisation accessible to all men. A shed's primary activity is the provision of a safe, friendly and healing environment where men are able to work on meaningful projects in the company of other men. The major objective of a Men's Shed is to advance the health and wellbeing of members, and to encourage social inclusion.

SPENDING LESS TIME AND EFFORT ON SANDING



Everyone loves the silky feel of finely sanded wood. No one loves the tedium of sanding. If only there was a way to get the results without the grind.

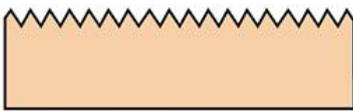
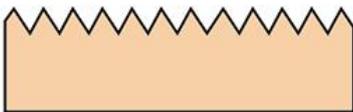
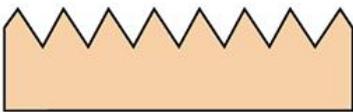
There is. Yes, there's a secret to making sanding go quickly, easily and painlessly, and if you keep reading, I'll tell you what it is.

You're welcome.

Overview

To be perfectly honest, most folks sand way too much. The goal is to sand very little, yet still get great results. That's entirely possible, but in order to do that, you need to know a few things; which paper and grits to use, when to switch grits or papers, how to use sandpaper efficiently, and most importantly, the object of each sanding step. After all, if you don't know what each sanding step is meant to accomplish, how can you know when to stop sanding?

The Steps



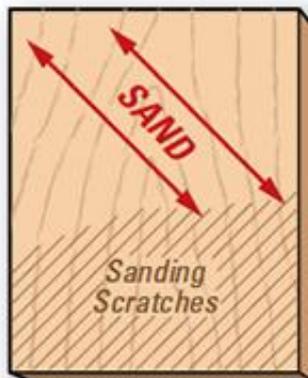
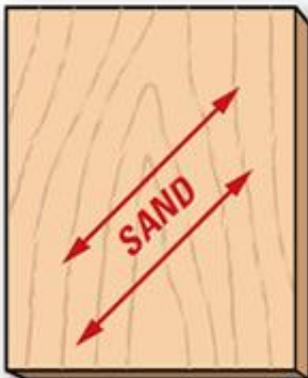
Don't skip grits. Each finer grit removes previous scratches.



The first round of sanding has two goals: flatten the wood and remove tool marks. That's all you need to do, and you want to do it as quickly as possible. Therefore, use the coarsest paper that's practical: usually, 80-grit. Using a harsh grit does this job quickly. If 80 doesn't do it fast enough, go down a grit to 60, then back to 80, but remember, the goal is to get it flat and remove tool marks quickly.

Once the wood is flat and free of tool marks, you move on to the second, third and all other sanding steps. They all share just one goal: to replace the sanding scratches from the previous grit with finer scratches. You do that by sanding with a grit close to the last one. For instance, go from 60 to 80, from 80 to 120, from 120 to 180, and from 180 to 220.

The Paper



First, sand in a direction diagonal to the grain. Then switch grits, and sand diagonally in the opposite direction. Stop when the sanding scratches from the previous grit disappear. Repeat.

When sanding raw wood, I prefer aluminium oxide grit. It's sharp, cuts fast and because it is usually friable, it fractures as you use it so that it continues to

present a sharp cutting surface to the wood. However, that does not mean you should overuse it. Sanding with dull aluminium oxide paper is false economy; it makes you work harder, go slower and accomplish less. Switch to a fresh sheet frequently and never mind if you haven't worn away every single bit of grit on the surface.

Now for the tough part: how to tell when it is time to stop sanding and move on to the next grit. I've explained what the objective of each step is, but to know when to stop, you need the best sanding techniques, both by hand and with a machine. That's because the technique itself will tell you when to stop sanding. This may sound hard to believe, but it is true. Bear with me and I'll show you what I mean.

By Hand



Wrap the sandpaper around a comfortable, hand-sized block lined with cork or rubber on the sanding face. Sand diagonally to the grain. Yes, I said diagonally, NOT with the grain. Diagonal sanding cuts the wood quickly and prevents “washboarding,” which often happens, especially on soft woods, when sanding with the grain. Washboarding occurs when the softer early wood bands erode more quickly than the harder latewood lines.

Now for the clever part. Switch grits, and sand diagonally in the OPPOSITE direction. Conveniently, your new scratches will be at right angles to the previous sanding scratches. As soon as all the scratches from the previous sanding are gone, you are done with that grit. That's easy to see, since they go in the opposite direction of how you are now sanding. Clever, eh? Now move to the next grit and, once again, change diagonals.

Random Orbital Sander



There's a trick for random orbit sanders as well. You've heard “slow and steady wins the race?” With a random orbit sander, the seemingly contradictory trick is to slow down in order to speed up.

There are two rules: don't press down on the sander too hard, and don't move it faster than one inch per second. Pressing down will slow the orbital movement, and that means it's less efficient and won't sand as fast. Moving the sander too quickly will create “pigtailed,” but worse, it will make it almost impossible to know when to stop sanding. You may find yourself scrubbing forever.

Moving a random orbit sander too quickly will create “pigtailed” on the surface of your wood. They're not cute — and you'll never know when to stop sanding.

However, if you move the sander only one inch per second, you only need to go over each area ONCE. At that speed, one pass will make the sander dwell about five seconds on each spot. Assuming you didn't skip a grit, that's just long enough to remove the previous sanding scratches. Hence, move the sander slower, and you'll get done sanding faster. You'll also know exactly when to move to the next paper.



Before you insist that you normally move the sander that speed, please take the speed test. Start at the top and move your finger to the bottom but take a full 9.5 seconds to do it. Now be honest; is that really how slowly you usually move your sander?

I thought not.

An Extra-Special Step

Garnet paper's U-shaped scratch pattern contrasts to aluminium oxide's V-shaped scratches.

One of my favourite sanding tricks is to follow my final grit, often 180, with the same grit, but in garnet paper. This time, sand by hand, going with the grain. The slightly dull garnet paper leaves a surface that takes stain more evenly, and it even helps burnish end grain, limiting its stain absorption somewhat.

Why does this work? Although aluminium oxide paper is usually friable, garnet paper is not. As you use it, the grit quickly rounds over, leaving a softer, U-shaped scratch rather than the harsher, V-shaped scratches typical of

aluminium oxide. By using the same grit size, you quickly and easily align the scratches with the wood grain while softening them up at the same time.

Now that you know the timesaving sanding tricks the professionals use, go on out there and sand, quickly and easily.

BY [MICHAEL DRESDNER](#) • OCT 15, 2019

Source - *Woodworker's Journal*



ROUTER BITS: FIVE FAST FACTS

Thirty years ago, every serious woodshop had a shaper to cut complicated contours onto solid wood stock. Now router tables and router bits have replaced shapers in many shops. Large bits and better routers have led the way in this workshop trend.



1. Speed matters. Large-diameter router bits, the kind that helped replace shapers, have optimal rpm limits. In general terms, the larger the diameter, the slower the speed setting. Check the instructions that come with the bit. While it seems counterintuitive to slow down your rpm for better cutting, it is imperative to set the router correctly. If your router does not have a speed control, you should not use it with large-diameter router bits.
2. Straight talk about straight bits: straight bits are perhaps the most versatile router bits in the shop. They can cut mortises, rabbets, grooves and dados, but that's just the beginning. Put a router guide bushing on your router base, and you can cut complicated curves, shapes and inlay openings using a run-of-the-mill straight bit (not forgetting box joints!)
3. Is all carbide created equal? Nope. Can an ordinary Joe or Josephine determine a bit's carbide quality by looking at it? Nope again. So how do you know? You can do your research and see what the manufacturer says about its carbide. You can also look at price. In router bits, as in so many aspects of life, you get what you pay for. For routing tasks that you will do often, a good quality bit will make your life easier.
4. Staying sharp: If my carbide router bit gets dull, can I have it sharpened? Yes. Should I have my dull router bit sharpened? It depends. This is simply a value equation. Compare the cost of sharpening to a new bit and decide. One trick you can try is using a diamond tool to hone the faces of the carbide cutters on your bit. Its effectiveness is limited, but it can help in a pinch.
5. While some routing operations have to be done in one pass (e.g., a dovetail cut), most cuts benefit from multiple passes of increasing depth. This is especially true when removing large amounts of stock, like when making deep grooves or using a large-diameter cutter like a panel-raising bit. In such cases, you actually save time by making multiple cuts — working smarter, not harder.

BY WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL STAFF

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