



crucible

Engraving Tool

The Crucible Engraving Tool cuts straight lines and arcs (when installed in a compass) to create geometric patterns, spells and glyphs on the surface of hardwoods and softwoods. While it was designed to engrave patterns found on ancient European vernacular furniture, the tool can also engrave surprisingly modern and bold surface decorations.

The Parts

The Crucible Engraving Tool is made of two parts: the aluminum handle and the pear-shaped carbon-steel cutter. The aluminum handle has a chuck that grasps the cutter. You can hold the aluminum handle like a pencil to make straight cuts. To do this, run the cutter against a wooden straightedge to make straight lines. Work across or askew to the grain of a board for cleaner cuts.

To make curved cuts, install the handle into any compass that accepts a pencil. This turns any compass

with a locking mechanism (large or small) into a tool that engraves arcs.

Sharpen the Cutter

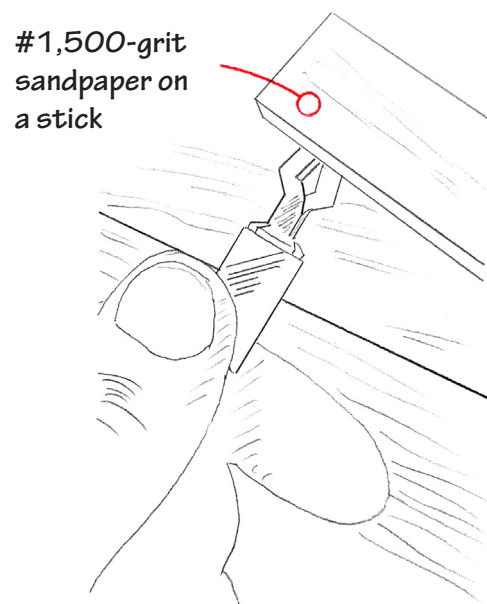
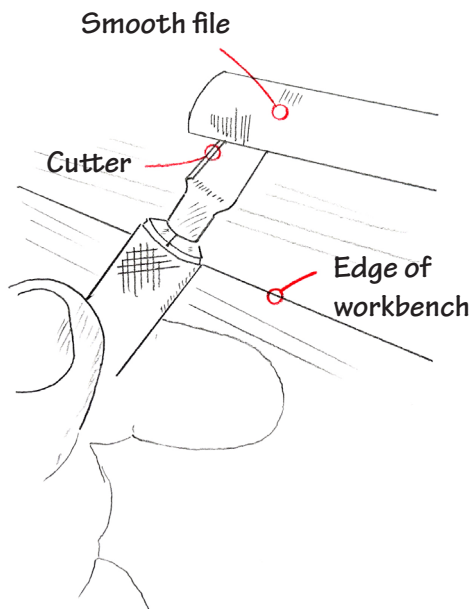
Because the cutter needs to cut in both directions for best results, you need to sharpen both sides of the cutter. One side of the cutter has a rough bevel from the factory. The other side does not. (Sorry, we wish both sides were identical.)

The cutter is thin, so it is easy to sharpen. Here's how we do it.

Install the cutter in the aluminum handle to make it easy to position. Shape the cutting edges with a smooth-cut file. We use a Nicholson 6" half-round double-cut smooth file. Brace the tool's handle against the edge of a workbench while filing. The engraving tools cut only about 1/16" deep, so don't work the entire edge - just the curved shape at the tip of the cutter.

Now polish the bevel. We use #1,500 automotive sandpaper stuck to a flat scrap of hardwood that's about the same size as the file. Polish the bevel by stroking it with the sandpaper. Finish the outside bevels by rubbing them on a strop charged with honing compound.

Now polish the inside surface of the cutter to get an effective edge. There are thin dowel-shaped oil-stones that can do the job (one brand is TOPINCN). Or you can wrap sandpaper around a thin dowel. Then charge the dowel with honing compound to finish the job.





Initial sharpening takes only a few minutes. Then you can maintain the edges by stroking the bevel and the interior of the cutter with wood/dowels charged with honing compound.

Use the Engraving Tool

Using the Crucible Engraving Tool is straightforward. A light touch - plus confidence - is important. It's a bit like cutting glass. And a little practice on scrap

will give you the confidence to tackle a finished piece.

First try a straight line. Clamp the cutter in the handle. Place a wooden straightedge on your work. We use a 1/4"-thick scrap that has sandpaper stuck to the underside so it doesn't slip. Hold the handle vertical with the flat of the tool against the straightedge. Slide the tool toward you and tip it toward you until it starts to make a nice cut. Hold it at this angle to finish the cut. You will quickly learn the proper angle and speed with a few practice cuts.

Now install the handle in a compass. Lock the compass firmly. The compass has to lock, or it will be difficult to control the cutter. To engrave an arc, begin with the cutter vertical and rotate the compass. Tilt the tool forward until it makes a nice cut. Hold that position as you finish the arc.

You will find that a steady hand and experimenting with grain direction on scrap will train you to use the tool. Wood is variable. And practice can help you overcome most variations.

