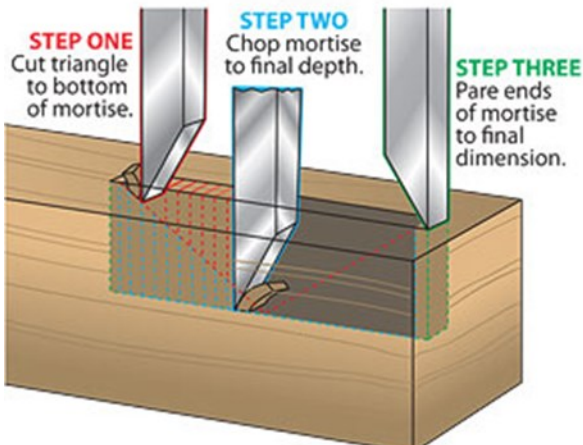


# Woodworking Tips

## Get the most out of your chisels



### 1-2-3 Mortising

To hand-cut a mortise with a mortising chisel, begin by chopping out chips between your scribed lines, leaving 1/16" at the ends. Move the chisel about 1/8" at a time, and strike it with a mallet. Then pry out the chips. Make a triangular pattern to the desired depth; then begin back-cutting the rest to match that depth. Finish by cutting away the remaining 1/16" at each end.



### Chisel out a perfect hinge mortise in 3 easy steps

Step 1, begin by making a series of angled "chops," keeping back 1/16" from the ends and back.

### Chisel out a perfect hinge mortise in 3 easy steps

Step 2, hold the chisel parallel to the edge of the workpiece and pare away the chip





Chisel out a perfect hinge mortise in 3 easy steps  
Step 3, clean up the bottom and perimeter walls with light cuts until the hinge fits snugly



Hand-cut half-blind dovetails with only a pair of chisels and a mallet

Remove the socket waste with a bench chisel, keeping 1/16" from the scribed sides and back.



Hand-cut half-blind dovetails with only a pair of chisels and a mallet

After making a vertical cut, counter with a horizontal cut to remove the chip.



Hand-cut half-blind dovetails with only a pair of chisels and a mallet

Pare the angled sidewalls down to the bottom of the sockets.





## Guide board



Hand-cut half-blind dovetails with only a pair of chisels and a mallet

Using a clamped-on guide board, pare away the final material from the back walls.

Hand-cut half-blind dovetails with only a pair of chisels and a mallet

Finally, use a skew chisel to clean out the corners to finish the sockets.



Hand-cut half-blind dovetails with only a pair of chisels and a mallet

Now you have two perfect pin sockets for a project part, such as an inset drawer front.

More information

For information on selecting the best chisel for your needs, view [All about wood chisels](#).



needs, view [All about wood chisels](#).

All about wood chisels

At the root of all woodworking lies a simple notion: A sharp tool can quickly and effectively change the shape of wood. And for several millennia, wood chisels have served as one of the fundamental tools for cutting and shaping wood. In the classes Tim Peters teaches, his students to use them for chopping mortises, paring tenons, cutting dovetails, carving reliefs, shaping table and chair legs, and so on.





## Take it from a pro

Tim Peters, master furnituremaker and professed hand-tool junkie, heads the woodworking department at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California.

First, understand the blade/handle connections

Chisels come in primarily two styles: **socket chisels** or **tang-type chisels**, as shown in photo. That means the handle either slips into a tapered hollow socket, or it slips over a tapered square or round tang milled into the blade. Disassembled, you can see how socket and tang chisels fit together.



Bench chisels: Buy these first

Fortunately, most woodworkers don't need dozens of specialized chisels. You can do the vast majority of your work with just a few common bench chisels. Bench chisels have 4"- to 6"-long blades with flat backs and beveled edges, as shown. Butt chisels are a subset of bench chisels, with similar design but shorter blades and handles. These chisels work great for tasks where a longer chisel proves obtrusive or unwieldy, as with joinery on small projects, such as jewelry boxes or toys.

## Paring chisels handle fine-cutting tasks

These chisels should never be struck with a mallet. Most paring chisels use tang-style construction, although any really sharp chisel could be employed to do some paring, slicing off thin layers of wood as you fine-tune a joint. Chisels specifically designed for paring usually have slender 6"- to 8"-long blades used for reaching deep into joints.



Opt for specialty chisels only when needed

You might find these specialized chisels handy for your home shop.

**Mortising chisels.** Whether you're a hand-tool traditionalist or you just don't want to fuss with setting up a mortiser or drill press, you can, with a little practice, chop mortises by hand with these heavy-duty chisels

## Corner chisels

These prove handy for squaring up corners of rabbets, dadoes, grooves, and mortises when struck by a mallet. So if you don't have a dedicated mortiser or mortising chisel, you can drill out most of the waste at the drill press, and then clean up the corners with one of these. Same goes for stopped channels made with a router.





### Crank-neck chisels

Marrying the best features of a hand plane and a paring chisel, a crank-neck slices away material while you rest the chisel blade flat on the workpiece. The bent handle lets you grip it comfortably without scraping your knuckles on the wood. These work well for shaving off proud wood plugs or dowels and for removing glue squeeze-out from inside corners.



### Skew chisels

Another form of paring chisel, the angled cutting edges on these work great for reaching into difficult areas to trim away material. I use them for paring dovetail sockets because I can hold the back flat against a surface and ensure a true cut. It's best to get right- and left-facing models for use on opposing sides of a socket.



### Consider Japanese chisels for durable performance

The Western-style chisels I've shown originated in Europe and are perfectly adequate for most work. But in my opinion, Japanese chisels have no equal. Here's why. Japanese chisels feature two layers of steel forged together into the blade: a harder, thin layer laminated behind a softer, thick front. As a result, the harder portion holds its sharp cutting edge longer than most Western-style chisels. Japanese-chisel manufacturers also grind a hollow back onto the blades, as shown, so you have less material to remove when lapping the back flat.

Whew! What a relief to learn this...

Ever walk into a room with some purpose in mind, only to completely forget what that purpose was?

Turns out, doors themselves are to blame for these strange memory lapses. Psychologists at the University of Notre Dame have discovered that passing through a doorway triggers what's known as an Event Boundary in the mind, separating one set of thoughts and memories from the next. Your brain files away the thoughts you had in the previous room and prepares a blank slate for the new locale.





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This Club/ Guild aims to assist members to improve their woodworking skills. Not all such activities occur in our Club premises, and some activities or events are promoted through this Newsletter and others directly to members in some other ways, but they are still Club/Guild activities, please support them. These activities may include personal and group tuition of members by other members (we all try to help one another for the benefit of the Club/Guild in this way) sessions in member's workshops, wood- gathering, events promoting our activities to members of the public, and other such activities and events.

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