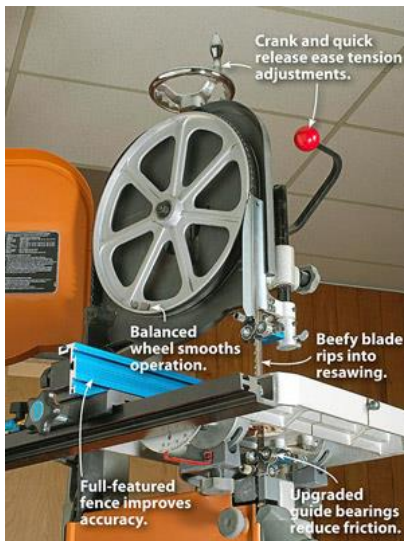


Woodworking Tips

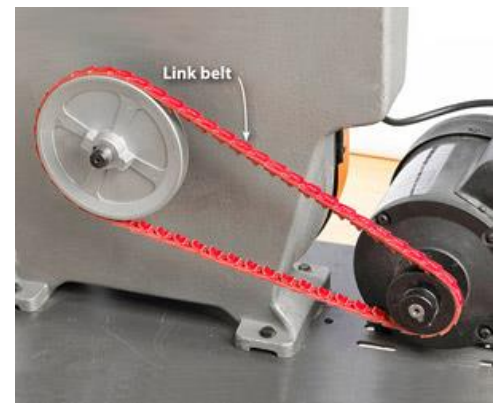


Accessories that improve performance

The bandsaw may be one of the easiest stationary tools to "amp up" with numerous accessories that improve performance or convenience. Some do both. Not every saw needs all these improvements, but yours will probably benefit from at least a few of these upgrades.

Boost power and performance

All the accessories in the world won't help much if your bandsaw stalls during demanding cuts or shakes like an over-caffeinated Chihuahua. Smooth out the tremors and get as much cutting power as

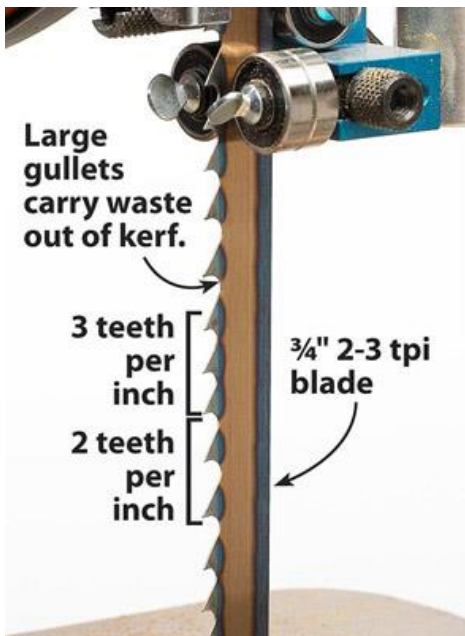


possible with these upgrades.

Cinch up your belt

When the V-belt that connects the motor pulley and drive pulley sits in one position too long, it can take on a permanent curve, or "set," where it wraps around the pulleys, causing a nasty vibration.

Replace it with a link belt that stays flexible and absorbs vibration better than one-piece V-belts. Buy it by the foot, then adjust its length to fit your saw by adding or removing links.



Put some teeth into it

Resawing wide stock requires all the power a bandsaw has to give, so make the most of your saw's efforts by stepping up to the widest 3-tooth-per-inch (tpi) blade your saw accepts. A wider blade flexes less for truer rip cuts and its larger surface area dissipates heat better so the blade stays sharp longer. The aggressive hook angle of the teeth on a resaw blade cuts quickly, generating a lot of sawdust. The large gullets clear that waste faster.

A blade with variable pitch, alternates sections of 2-tpi and 3-tpi. The 2-tpi sections cut quickly, even though the widest stock your saw handles. The 3 tpi sections reduce vibration, giving a relatively smooth finish.

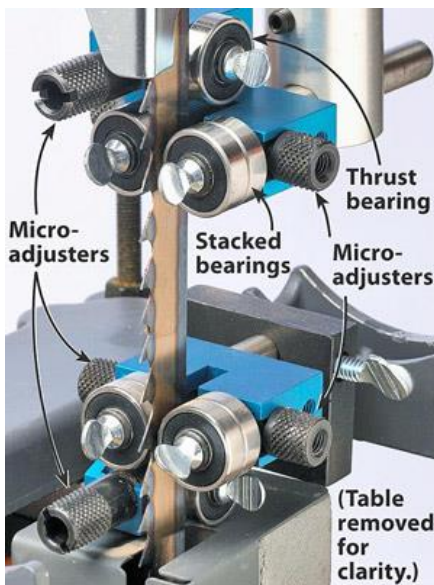




Checks and balances

If replacing the belt doesn't calm the jitters, check for out-of-balance wheels. To do this, remove the blade and drive belt so the wheels spin freely. Working on one wheel at a time, make a mark on the inside edge of the rim at its lowest point. Give the wheel a gentle spin, wait for it to stop, and make another mark at the bottom. Do this five times. Randomly-spaced marks mean the wheel is balanced. But a cluster of marks in one area points out a heavy spot and indicates the wheel needs to be balanced.

To do this, clean the wheel rim directly opposite the marks with rubbing alcohol and allow it to dry; then apply self-adhesive wheel weights to the cleaned area, starting with 1/4 ounce. Repeat the "spin test," this time making marks with a different-colored marker. Grouped marks again tell you to apply more weight, or change the amount or position of weights already in place. For small adjustments, divide the soft metal weights with an old chisel or knife.



Guidance counseling: Keeping the blade and workpiece on track

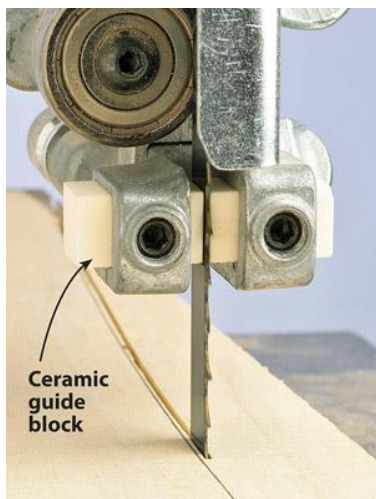
Without guide blocks or bearings above and below the table, a bandsaw blade would wander like a four-year-old on her first ride without training wheels. Like that child, bandsaw blades, and sometimes the workpiece, need guidance. Keep them on track with these enhancements.

Get your bearings

Guide blocks, with their large surface area, work especially well guiding wide blades, while roller bearings create less friction and heat buildup. Stacked roller-bearing guides from Carter Products, above, combine the best of blocks and bearings. They also have toolless adjustment: Twist a thumbscrew to loosen a bearing; then fine-tune its position with the microadjuster. Cinch up the thumbscrew to lock the bearing in position.

Specialized guide bearing

A specialized guide bearing helps narrow blades (1/8" and 1/16") track true during curved cuts. The rear of the blade rides in a groove in the bearing's edge. The groove provides side-to-side support and the bearing reduces friction.



Block party

If you don't have the budget for bearing guides, ceramic guide blocks provide an inexpensive upgrade from the factory-supplied metal blocks. The large, flat faces provide the same solid blade support, but the ceramic material generates less friction, so they run cooler. That translates into longer blade life. Installation is as simple as loosening a bolt or thumbscrew to remove the steel blocks, then putting the ceramic blocks in place. They wear so well that the manufacturer guarantees them forever.





Fence me in

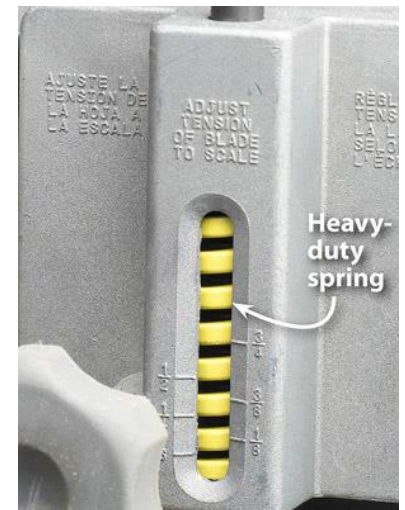
For resawing and straight-line rips, a good fence is essential, yet many saws come with no fence or a poor-performing one. The Kreg fence packs a lot of features in an affordable package. It pivots to account for blade drift (the tendency of a blade to pull to one side). For sawing thin, narrow stock, mount the fence with the wide face down on the table. It can then extend under the guide assembly, even with the assembly close to the tabletop. The fence easily lifts off the rail for quick switching from straight cuts to freehand work. An optional micro-adjuster makes precise fence movements easy.

thing

Like any of us, a bandsaw occasionally needs relief from tension - the tension needed to keep its blade cutting true, that is. Relieving that tension extends the life of the wheel bearings and tires, and makes blade changes possible. These accessories simplify taking your saw from tightly wound to relaxed and back again.

Put the squeeze on

Bandsaw springs, like all of us, lose their ability to bounce back as they get older. If yours no longer has enough "oomph" to tension wide blades, replace it with a heavy-duty aftermarket spring. On most saws, installation goes quickly and doesn't require any special tools.



We found that after installing a stronger spring, it took fewer turns of the tensioning knob to properly tension a blade. With springs to fit most sizes of bandsaws, this inexpensive upgrade offers a lot of bang for your buck.



Take 'er for a spin

Small tensioning knobs prove difficult to grip, don't provide much leverage, and only allow half of a rotation before you need to change your grip. Turning them can literally be a pain. Mount a 6"-diameter cast wheel with a spinning handle, and adjusting blade tension becomes easy. The chrome finish prevents rust and looks nice, too.

Instant tension relief

A quick-release lever applies or removes blade tension in a snap. In the up position, the mechanism keeps the blade under tension, ready for use. Pivot the lever down toward the table to release all tension for blade changes and between work sessions. The middle position relieves stress on the wheels and saw frame, but provides enough tension to hold the blade in place while mounting a blade and checking tracking. This upgrade took about 15 minutes to install, a small investment





Time to lighten up

No bandsaw add-on will help much if you can't see your work. So defeat the forces of darkness with a task light. The magnetic base on this one sticks to any steel or iron surface, and the gooseneck puts the light exactly where you need it. Eleven LEDs shine a bright spotlight without the heat of incandescent bulbs. Juice comes from four AA batteries in the base, or use the optional AC power cord



Spaceage Ceramic Guideblocks:

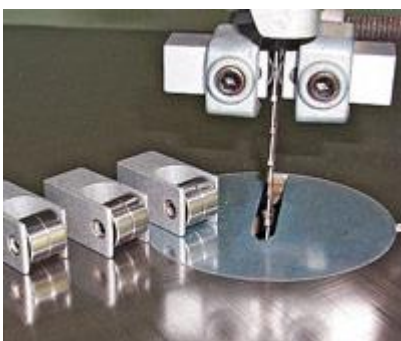
Editor test-drive:

Because the Spaceage Ceramic Guideblocks (SCG) and thrust bearings matched my 14" Delta's original steel blocks and bearings in size and use the same mounting hardware, I didn't need to replace a bunch of parts to swap them out. I installed the top bearing and guides in 5 minutes, but replacing the lower thrust bearing took 45 minutes because I had to first remove the lower guide assembly. In doing so, I discovered the original bearing had seized; not a problem with the SCG bearing because it does not turn.

The manufacturer recommends .005" clearance between the blade and guides; I used the thickness of a piece of paper. I cut turning blanks from a variety of woods up to 6" thick and radii from 2" to 10" using 1/4" and 3/4" blades, and the slippery-smooth SCGs held the

blade true without any sign of wear. Their low cost and durability make them an inexpensive but significant upgrade.

Iturra Band Rollers



Editor test-drive:

Iturra's newest Band Rollers (model #10001) feature ceramic bearings in steel housings. I installed them in my 14" Delta saw in about 15 minutes, as they slid into the existing guide holders and adjusted with the same setscrews. There are no replacement thrust bearings. Using a feeler gauge, I positioned the bearings .003" from the blade, according to Iturra's instructions. Although Iturra does not recommend using its Band Rollers with blades less than 1/8", I tested mine with 1/8", 1/4", and 1/2" blades, cutting thick stock and making tight-radius cuts to force the blade against the bearings. I found no problems in performance. By reducing the amount of blade twisting, the Band Rollers resulted in more

accurate scrollcutting and resawing. These bearing guides showed no signs of wear, a big upgrade from my square-block graphite guides.

Carter Conversion Kit



Editor test-drive:

I spent a mere 15 minutes installing the Carter Conversion Kit on my 14" Jet bandsaw. It replaced not only the guides, but also my saw's entire upper and lower blade-guide assembly. I was surprised, however, to find that the two Allen wrenches needed to install and make adjustments to the bearings were not included in the kit.

I immediately noticed improved performance from my bandsaw as the bearing guides gave it a huge boost in accuracy. When cutting arcs and circular shapes -- and especially in resawing -- the bearings proved much better than my old graphite guides at holding the blade perpendicular to the workpiece with no twisting or deflection. Aside from the price

tag, the only drawback I found was the increased noise as compared with my previous guides. But I'm willing to trade a little noise for the greatly superior cutting results.

by Kevin Boyle, Senior Design Editor





Choosing bandsaw blades with added information on bandsaw safety

If you want one general rule for choosing the correct bandsaw blade, remember this: Use the widest blade with the coarsest teeth that will make an acceptably smooth cut in your material. Here's the information you need to apply this simple rule effectively.

The versatile bandsaw fits into the picture virtually everywhere in woodworking. From carving to furnituremaking, you'll find tasks that a bandsaw does best. But, to get the most out of your machine, you're going to have to pick the best blade for the job. Here's how.

Club/Guild Newsletters

This Club/Guild aims to assist members to improve their working skills. Not all such activities occur in our Guild 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 members' workshops, wood-gathering, our activities to members of the public, and other such activities and events.

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