Dovetail Saw User's Guide
Glenmere Hand Tools
Fall 2023

Thank you for purchasing this dovetail saw. I hope that you will enjoy using it for many years to come. This guide provides facts about your saw, how to use it safely, and how to maintain it.

Saw Facts and Use

- This saw is filed for taking **rip cuts** (cutting with the grain of the wood). Although it's possible to cross cut with this saw, you are likely to have more tearout as a result of the tooth geometry.
- Like most dovetail saws, the handle on this saw is set up for a "three fingered" grip. The index finger points along the saw, resting on one of the sloped sides along the brass back. The middle, ring, and pinky fingers go through the handle. This grip helps you to better orient the saw when cutting.
- When used properly, a dovetail saw should not require a great deal of force/muscle to take cuts. Keeping your saw sharp ensures it cuts easily and reduces the likelihood of accidents.
- The saw was filed with a 15 degree rake angle.
- The saw plate is 0.020" thick (nominal). With its teeth set, the saw cuts a kerf that is roughly 0.022" wide.
- The handle is made of walnut (if dark colored) or beech. The saw plate is 1095 blue tempered spring steel. The brass back and saw nuts are 360 free machining brass.

Health and Safety

Hand tools are generally very safe when used responsibly. However, saws cut wood so they can necessarily also cause injury. Here are some safety recommendations to avoid accidents:

- Ensure that your shop has proper personal protective equipment. Always wear safety glasses when using the saw.
- This saw should **only** be used for cutting dry wood.
- Take your time. Rushing leads to accidents and injury.
- Ensure that your workspace is clean and has proper lighting before using the saw.
- Use a well-made vise/fixture that will hold your workpieces rigidly while you cut them.
- Only use the saw when you are fully alert. Don't use the saw when you are affected by fatigue, medication, alcohol, or drugs.
- Don't allow children or inexperienced woodworkers to use this saw unsupervised.
- Always wash your hands after working in the shop.
- Saw dust can cause cancer and other respiratory issues. Although this is more of a concern for large power tools, mitigate your risk by sawing in an area with good ventilation. Use a quality respirator to protect yourself if necessary, especially when working with exotic wood species. Research health-risks associated with your materials before sawing.
- ⚠ Prop. 65 Warning: This product can expose you to chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer. For more information, go to www.P65Warnings.ca.gov.

General Care and Maintenance

- Your saw is likely to deteriorate if exposed to extreme heat or humidity. I recommend keeping it in a relatively climate-controlled area (i.e. indoors) when not in use.
- The handle of the saw was finished with boiled linseed oil. I refresh the finish on my saws every 3-6 months by putting a small (1-2 teaspoons) of oil on a clean cloth and wiping down the handle. Linseed oil can also be used on the brass portions of the saw, to reduce tarnishing/oxidation. Don't allow linseed oil to "pool" once applied; it will become gummy when it dries like this. After wiping down the saw handle it should look glossy but not wet.
- Friction makes it harder to saw well. In my shop, I apply a small amount of 3-in-1 oil to the blade of the saw each time I use it. This protects the saw plate from corrosion and makes cutting easier. I use the Paul Sellers' rag-in-a-can oiler to spread oil evenly across the plate.

Sharpening

I'm happy to resharpen the saws I've sold, and only ask that the owner pay shipping both ways. If you decide to sharpen your saw (a useful life skill) here are some tips:

- Bob Rozaieski's sharpening tutorials on youtube are an excellent primer if you are just getting started.
- I use Glardon Vallorbe Swiss Three Square, #2 medium, 7 ⅞ inch needle files for sharpening all my joinery saws. I get mine from pmcsupplies.com (no affiliation). One file will last for many sharpenings. I recommend fitting your file with a handle (you can make a simple handle by drilling a hole in a cork, golf ball, or a rounded scrap of wood).
- Use either a vintage saw set or one from a reputable tool dealer. Avoid saw sets from websites like amazon.com; these tend to be made with mild steel rather than hardened steel and become unusable after setting only a few teeth. You are unlikely to need a saw set until you've re-sharpened 3-4 times.
- I use Tom Lie-Nielsen's saw vise design, which is quite inexpensive to make from a small amount of plywood and some hardwood battens.
- I recommend acquiring an Optivisor (or some other form of magnification) and some layout fluid (such as Dykem) if you plan on sharpening regularly; both make it easier to see how the sharpening is progressing.