

Good Woodworking Kit & Tools

New products, tools and tests

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Diamonds are forever

This kit has everything you need to sharpen, hone and polish your tools while delivering fast and repeatable results every time



Diamonds are not only a girl's best friend, but also my favourite medium for honing, and Trend have long held my gaze in this area with their premium double-sided bench stone, which has been my firm favourite for a decade.

For anyone new to the diamond honing arena, it can be easy to get sucked into buying a cheap inferior stone and encounter the pitfalls therein, including a lack of flatness, and also the diamonds either working loose from the plate, or if cheaper polycrystalline diamonds are used, premature failure in its ability to cut and hone.

So while a quality stone is a bigger investment, the long-term benefits tend to speak for themselves. My own Trend stone still performs flawlessly after being worked hard over its life span.

This particular set from Trend also addresses the thorny issue of honing in general by including a full kit to allow anyone, from novice to pro, to achieve consistent and keen edges on standard flat-backed and square-edged tools.

Alongside the 203 x 75mm double-sided stone, there is a honing guide, a piece of stropping leather, honing compound and cutting fluid for the stone itself as well as a non-slip mat for the stone.

The mat works well, but with the plate of the stone only 8mm-thick, you have to use this near the edge of the bench to back off chisels without the handles hitting the bench and keeping the blades from sitting flat.

It would be prudent to invest in a dedicated holder to lift the stone high enough to prevent this for ease of use in any situation.

The stone

The stone itself is excellent. It's super-flat at +/- 0.0005in over its surface, with the 1,000 grit finer side in a continuous solid style while flipping to the 300 grit coarse side reveals a diamond checker pattern on the reverse. These checkers are designed to clear heavier swarf deposits that can quickly build up, as the

cut is pretty aggressive. This side is ideally suited to initial flattening of new chisels or irons and removing small nicks with the finer side kept for the honing stage.

Honing guide

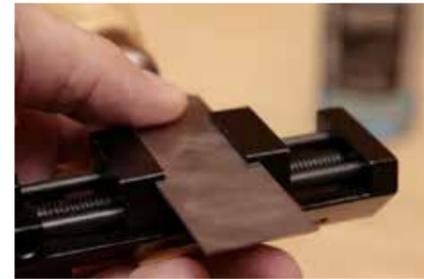
The honing guide is well constructed and very simple to use. It has a couple of drawbacks, however: it won't close down to hold a 6mm or under chisel – 10mm is its smallest capacity according to the packaging but I found it will just about grab an 8mm one.

The design also secures the blades by lifting them up against the top shoulders to ensure a parallel hone by means of sloping lower shoulders that automatically lift the blades

Diamond honing & polishing kit



▲ You slide the blade through until it rests against the ridge of the required hone angle



▲ As the guide is tightened, the blade is lifted until it is secured against the side tabs



▲ Blade projection is sufficient to allow easy backing off while still in the guide



▲ The wide roller on the guide keeps things very stable as you work on the stone



▲ The honing compound is quite hard and chalky when applying to the leather



▲ It does work well enough but the leather is best bonded to a board

to the correct position as it is tightened. This method of gripping the blades may be slightly limiting for some as it means that only dovetail chisels, plane irons or blades with a thickness of less than 7mm will slide under the shoulders to secure them, but that should cover most general day-to-day tools. The overall width capacity is 58mm, so unless you own a No.8 jointer with a 2 7/8in blade, it covers a wide range.

The side clamping method holds the blades well with the jaws always sitting central to the jig for balanced honing. You can also add an extra nip on the brass knob with a screwdriver if needed.

Sitting the guide with a blade on the setting plate, it's simply a matter of projecting it enough until it registers against the ridged profile to any of the five common angles, and then you're ready to go.

The 64mm brass roller keeps the guide stable as you work it over the stone, and being diamond the cut is very quick and requires little pressure. Although the raised burr is flat, I found that applying side pressure as you work, the guide allows you to achieve a camber on a plane iron if needed.

Blade projection is more than enough to allow the wire edge to be backed off with plenty of support on the stone while still in the jig – a definite plus point. From here you can also strop on the leather and this can be done on the bench top, but I'd bond the leather to a flat board to give an easier and more consistent performance.

The supplied polishing compound does a good job but I found it a little hard and chalky; I prefer a softer, waxier compound for this task, but in general it does its job as it should and lifts the edge that bit more if needed.

Conclusion

The cost of the kit might seem a bit high, especially if you compare it to others, but it's great value. You get a large double-sided, ultra-flat premium stone, a decent, easy to use honing guide and a few other very useful bits and pieces, all of which makes it ideal for anyone who struggles to get consistent keen edges on the traditional square-edged and flat-backed tools we rely on the most. **BT**

Good The Woodworking Verdict

+ Quality stone; fast, repeatable results; easy to set guide

- Polishing compound is hard and chalky; stone is better with a holder, which allows you to get it higher for chisels

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: £141.89

Stone size: 203 x 75mm

Grades: 300 & 1,000 grit (50 & 15 micron)

Honing guide capacities:

Max blade width: 58mm

Min width: 10mm

Max blade thickness: 7mm

Web: www.trend-uk.com

Prices

Our product prices reflect typical values as we go to press. We cannot guarantee these prices, though, and thoroughly recommend that you shop around.

How we rate...

- ★ Don't get your hopes up or your wallet out!
- ★★ Well, it works but really needs improvement
- ★★★ Performs well, but you will find better
- ★★★★ Great performance and value for money
- ★★★★★ So good, even Andy would get his wallet out!