

# Faster sharpening

## Ian Taylor takes the Trend FastTrack

There always seems to be an interesting range of sharpening aids on the market. This one from Trend is aimed at allowing you to create very precise 25° bevels on chisels and plane blades, and then to grind a 30° secondary bevel on the cutting edge. The principle is that the upper part slides smoothly and accurately on the lower component, and works a diamond sharpening plate back and forward across the blade at a precise angle. One side of the slide is angled for the 25° grind and the other for the 30° bevel.

The tool uses precise machined and anodized aluminium components to define the shapes and angles of the mating parts. The moving component is held in place with a dovetail slide mechanism, so that only side-to-side motion is possible. The mating horizontal faces of the slide have nylon inserts to reduce friction, though you are recommended to apply some light lubricating oil to the dovetail slides.

The diamond plates are held in place by rare-earth magnets fixed on the slide. These fit into recesses machined in the plastic backing of the plates. There are two grades included – coarse and fine. The plates are used dry, with no lubrication.

### Using FastTrack

Start by holding the chisel or plane blade you want to sharpen bevel-up on the lower unit, against a stop at right angles to the sliding action. Work the slide back and forward with the 25° angle holding the coarse grade plate first, until you can see there's a uniform bevel. Then progress to the finer grit.

When you're satisfied with that, you can flip the slide and move on to the 30° angle to apply a secondary bevel. You don't need to exert any pressure; fast, light action gives good results. In fact, you can't exert any real downward pressure on the slide, because it only moves in a horizontal plane. But if you press the blade too hard against the plate you can stall the sliding action, in effect using the bevel as a wedge to lock things tight, so gently does it. It works well, but if your bevel is well off 25° to start, you'll find it takes a while to bring it back to spec. Replacement diamond plates are available, priced at £11.16.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend
- 01923 212497
- [www.trendmachinery.co.uk](http://www.trendmachinery.co.uk)



The moving slide carries the diamond plates

Only side-to-side movement is possible