





Lesson 5: Understanding Chisels in Woodworking

Introduction


Chisels are among the oldest and most versatile woodworking tools. They are used to cut, shape, pare, and clean joints, often with the aid of a mallet or by hand pressure. The effectiveness of chisels lies in their sharp cutting edge and the skill of the user. Different types of chisels are designed for specific tasks- from fine trimming to heavy-duty mortising. In this lesson, you will learn about common types of chisels, their uses, and how to properly handle and maintain them.

Types of Chisels

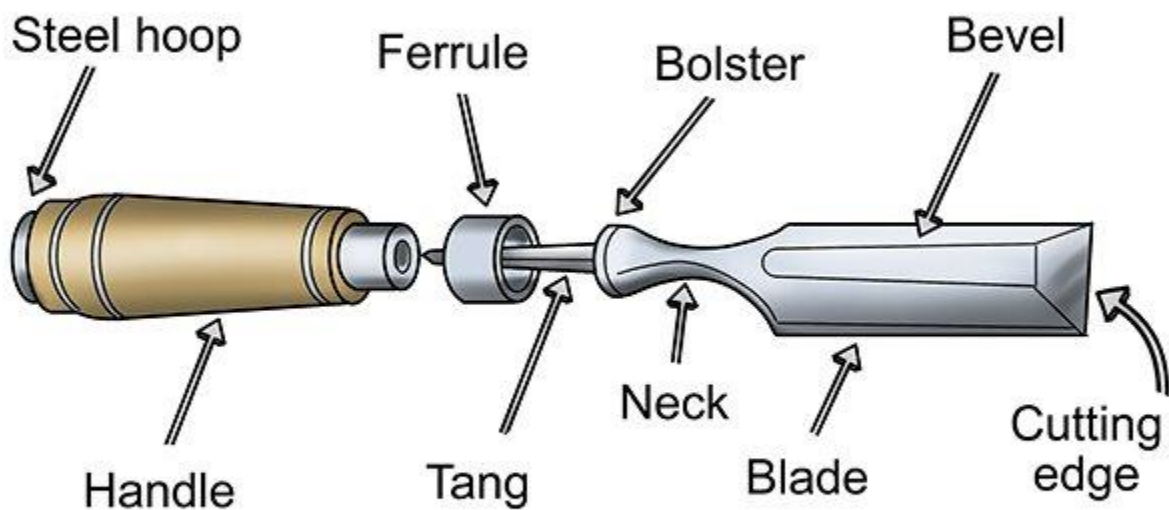
	Chisel	Description	Common Uses
	Bevel-Edged Chisels	The most common woodworking chisel, with beveled edges for easy access into tight corners.	Cutting dovetails, cleaning joints, and general bench work.
	Paring Chisels	Long, thin chisels designed for delicate work; used with hand pressure only (not with a mallet).	Trimming and fine-fitting joints, smoothing wood surfaces.
	Mortise Chisels	Thick, strong chisels with square edges designed to withstand mallet blows.	Cutting deep mortises and chopping heavy joints.
	Skewed Chisels	Chisels with angled cutting edges (usually 30°–45°).	Cutting deep mortises and chopping heavy joints.

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	Japanese Chisels (Nomi)	Traditional chisels made with laminated steel (hard edge + soft backing). Extremely sharp and durable.	Cutting deep mortises and chopping heavy joints.
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Key Part of the Chisel



Safety Practices When using Chisels

Safety Aspect	Guidelines
Sharpness	Always keep chisels sharp to reduce the risk of slips.
Cutting Direction	Cut away from your body and keep hands behind the cutting edge.
Use of Mallet	Use a wooden or rubber mallet with chisels meant for striking (avoid metal hammers).
Workpiece Stability	Secure the wood with clamps or a vice before chiseling.
Proper Storage	Store chisels with blade guards or in racks to avoid accidents.



Using the Right Chisel for the Job

- Bevel-Edged Chisel → Best for dovetails, fine joinery, and trimming.
- Paring Chisel → Ideal for delicate hand paring and final adjustments.
- Mortise Chisel → Designed for heavy chopping and making mortises.
- Skewed Chisel → Perfect for accessing corners and angled cuts.
- Japanese Chisel → Precision tool for cabinetmaking and detailed woodworking.

Maintaining and Storing Chisels

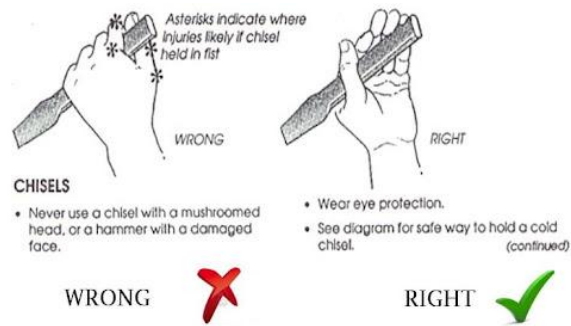
Practice	Description
Sharpening	Hone regularly using sharpening stones or guides for a razor-sharp edge.
Cleaning	Wipe after use to remove dust, resin, or glue.
Rust Prevention	Apply a thin coat of oil to prevent corrosion.
Storage	Use blade covers, racks, or tool rolls to protect edges and prevent injuries.
Handle Care	For wooden-handled chisels, oil occasionally to prevent drying and cracking.

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Woodworking Terminology

- **Bevel** – The sloped surface ground to form the cutting edge.
- **Tang** – The tapered portion of the chisel that fits into the handle.
- **Mortise** – A rectangular cavity cut into wood to receive a tenon.
- **Nomi** – Japanese term for chisels, known for laminated steel construction.



Reference

Butt, A. (2022, April 11). *Bench-Chisel Safety*. FineWoodworking.

<https://www.finewoodworking.com/project-guides/hand-tools/safety-manual-woodworking-chisels?srsltid=AfmBOortQMW4FwVOiziF3p4ZmRfN55gynBZs1cBTOL9-mpy1cwLAB7O8>

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<https://woodworkersinstitute.com/woodworking-chisels-an-introduction/>

The logo is positioned at the top of the page. It features the text 'S.A.W' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below it, the words 'Skills and Assembly in Woodworking' are written in a smaller, black sans-serif font. The background of the logo area is a light cream color with a network of thin, light brown lines and small circles, resembling a technical drawing or a molecular structure. The entire logo is set against a background of solid orange and brown geometric shapes.

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