



Sharpening #80 Cabinet Scrapers

#80 scrapers are wonderfully useful for smoothing large surfaces and doing vigorous work. Their side handles are easier on your fingers than plain card scrapers, both ergonomically and thermally. Though it's not exactly the same as sharpening a hand scraper, preparing a #80 for use is quite straightforward. You'll start with a different blade shape, sharpen it differently

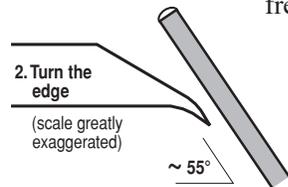
& use the burnisher differently—but all that aside, the process will look very familiar. You're going to sharpen the blade, then use a burnisher to shape the edge into a tiny, high-angle cutting tool.

The most visible difference between a card scraper and the blade in your #80 is that while card scrapers' edges are square, the handled scraper's working edge is beveled like a chisel or plane iron. Every-



thing in print says the bevel angle should be 45°, but Tage Frid taught that a standard chisel angle (around 30°) works just fine—and as usual, he was right. It does work, and if you've already trained yourself to sharpen at 25° or 30°, you won't have to learn to do it at an unfamiliar angle.

On a well-used blade, start by filing away the remains of the old worn-out burr. (Scraper blades are tempered softer than plane irons, and can be cut readily with a file.) Next, sharpen the scraper exactly as you would a chisel, right up to your finest stone. You want the edge to be razor sharp to get the most out your scraper. Handling the small scraper blade can be awkward, so here's another bit of creative wisdom from the estimable Mr. Frid: handle it! Shape a piece of scrap wood to look like a chisel roughly 2" wide. Saw a narrow slot (a little thinner than the #80 blade) into the nose of the piece. Slip the scraper blade into the slot, and you may now hold it just as easily as any chisel. (By the way, feel free to borrow this idea for spokeshave blades or other tools too small to grasp easily.) Sharpen the edge straight and square.



Lay the blade on your bench with the

freshly sharpened edge hanging over the side. Wipe a liberal smear of oil along the bevel (carefully, please—it's rude to bleed on your tools!) Bring on your burnisher at roughly 55° (give your best guess at 45°, then tilt the burnisher a little more) and gently rub it along the cutting edge. Do this several times

with increasing pressure, stopping every other stroke to feel what's going on. When you feel a very small burr on the back of the blade, you're done.

Make sure the thumb screw in your scraper is backed well out of the way. Slip the finished blade back into your #80 from beneath, taking care not to damage the edge. The bevel is toward the rear; the flat back of the blade leans toward the curved nose of the tool. For very shallow scraping, put the scraper on a flat surface, hold the blade down with one finger and tighten the screws that secure it in place. Use the thumb screw to flex the center



of the blade forward and down for very finely controlled shavings. For slightly more aggressive (and wider) shavings, put a piece of letter paper under the front edge of the sole, then press the blade down lightly and tighten in place. This presets a very shallow cutting depth all the way across the blade, and of course if needed the depth can be increased with the thumb screw.

#80 scrapers are designed to be pushed; pulling, while perfectly legal, makes it difficult to apply the pressure needed for consistent cutting. Just as with a card scraper, you'll sometimes get best results by skewing the tool slightly left or right for the smoothest possible cutting. On very wild grain, hold the scraper square to keep tearout to a tiny minimum.

