

Coiling Bandsaw Blades



Coiling bandsaw blades is easier than you think. As with many apparently complex woodworking chores, complication arises from trying to assimilate or carry out too many steps at once. Taken one at a time, each step is almost childishly simple and easy to accomplish.

Therefore, we'll try to show you, one step at a time, an effective way to coil bandsaw blades. We suggest that you compel yourself not to read ahead. Read just one sentence, do what it says until you're comfortable, then read the next sentence. You can do everything very slowly; speed is neither necessary nor helpful. A death grip doesn't help either. If you squeeze the blade too hard it will bite you back, so hold it lightly.

1. Go get a bandsaw blade to practice with, preferably between 1/4" & 1/2" wide. Hold the uncoiled blade in a horizontal circle in front of you, teeth up. For the purpose of this discussion, we'll identify 6 o'clock as the point nearest your navel; 12 o'clock is the point farthest from you.



2. Support the blade with your left hand at about 9 o'clock: palm up, fingers below the blade pointing toward 2 o'clock, thumb closing lightly over the top.

3. Hold the other side of the blade with your right hand at 3 o'clock: palm down, fingers above the blade pointing left toward 10 o'clock, thumb wrapped lightly beneath.

4. Move your hands toward each other to halve the distance between them, squeezing the blade into an oval.

5. Without moving your elbow, bend your left wrist up toward you as if you were tipping a beer.

6. Without moving your elbow, bend your right wrist down as if you were casting a fly.

When both fists are roughly vertical (like holding a steering wheel), the blade will be bent into the shape of a saddle, with high lobes left and right, low lobes front and back.



7. Without moving your elbow, rotate your left wrist about 45° clockwise, bringing the left lobe of the saddle down to the right.



8. Without moving your elbow, rotate your right wrist about 45° counterclockwise, bringing the right lobe down to the left above the left lobe.

As you rotate your wrists you'll see the low lobe at your navel moving up & forward, while the front low lobe moves back toward it. It doesn't matter which lies above the other.

9. Keep on rotating your left wrist, letting your hand migrate toward 6-o'clock, until the left lobe (now a loop) is horizontal.

10. Rotate your right wrist, letting your hand move to 12 o'clock, until its loop too is horizontal.

11. Step back and admire. If you've been living right and thinking good thoughts, you just coiled a bandsaw blade! If it didn't work perfectly, never fear. It was only a first try, after all. Have another go at it, one sentence at a time. Sooner or later it'll work, and there'll be a new blade coiling expert in the woodworking world.