

Blacksmithing Hints and Tips

Chisel and Punch Holder

Fasten a narrow shelf on a wall with a strip magnet about 3 inches above it. When you put your chisels or punches with the head down on the shelf the magnet holds it in place and you can see what kind of punch or chisel it is.

Drill Press Chuck Key Holder

Put a strong magnet in a convenient place on his drill press and sticks his chuck key to magnet when he's done and always knows where his chuck key is.

If you are always misplacing the chuck key to your drill press. Fasten a retractable key chain that's attached to the column of the drill press. The key chain is held in place with an ordinary hose clamp. And it's connected to the chuck key by means of a short dowel. A hole drilled in one end of the dowel accepts the handle of the chuck key. (use epoxy to hold it in place.) An eye hook is screwed into the opposite end of the dowel. Now the eye hook is simply slipped onto the ring at the end of the key chain

Parts Cleaning

Parts can be cleaned easier by using a Garden Sprayer filled with your favorite nonflammable solvent

Drawing on Metal

A Gel ink pen works great for writing on grey or shiny metal. It makes a fine line.

O-Rings

Put o-rings over knob onto your vice handle to keep from pinching hand

Old File

Grind old file on one end 45 degrees for a scraper to use for scraping off hot slag.

Splitting

Put a center punch mark at the start of a split on both sides of metal

When spitting stand straight in line with the split.

Dinner Bell

Use a S Hook bent at a 90 degrees to hang a dinner bell from. It will make the triangle hang straight.

Hot Cut

Make an easy hot cut take a old brick hammer and straighten it out.
Anneal the hammer head.

Vise

Use a vise to make accurate bends. Mark vise for the length of the bend.

Leather Gloves

Leather gloves get hot quick and retain enough heat to burn you before you can remove them. Cotton gloves are a better choice.

Anvil

Get to know your anvil and it's measurements.

Round a section to remove sharp edges for bending a smoother radius

Swing Arm Lamp

Mount a swing arm lamp in the center of you workbench. You can swing the lamp to either side of the bench as needed.

Photographs

Take photos of your work with a ruler next to your work.

Drawings

Make drawings of your work with measurements so you can refer to at a later date.

Center Punch

Grind a flat on one side of the point so can see where you want to Punch better

Magnet

Use a magnet to hold small items while grinding so you won't grind off your fingers.

Use a big magnet to hold items while you grind or wire brush them.

Oiler

Use a empty dawn bottle and get inside ink tube about 2 inches long. The tube is the right size to slide into the cap of the Dawn bottle cap.

Fractions

To divide a fraction in half, double the bottom number for example: half of 3/8 is 3/16 or 5/8 is 5/16

Borax

Put borax in a squeeze bottle and squeeze out the borax on your weld.

Align Holes for Punching

Grind a center punch so the end of the taper is the same size of the hole you want punched. Drive the center punch all the way in to the taper.

That will leave the it right size to place your punch so you don't have to guess where to place your punch and have a accurate placement of your hole.

Voltage Control

Use a voltage control on your angle grinder to keep better control with a wire brush. It also keeps the wire brush from coming apart as fast and makes it a lot safer.

Measuring Tapes, Rulers and Squares.

When I have a broken measuring tape Take the first 2 feet to use around the shop.

Take a 12 in by 8 in Square and cut the 8 in off at $\frac{1}{2}$ in mark. It makes a handy hook rule to measure short pieces.

Cut a 12 in by 8 in square down to 4 in by 6 in for a handy small square.

Modeling Clay

Use modeling clay to make prototypes.

Pipe

To find the center of a piece of pipe form one end to the other, lay a piece of angle iron down it's length and draw a line down the angle iron.

Old Hammers

Use an old hammer on punches and chisels so you won't ruin the head of your good hammer

Cooling Off a Small Section of Iron

Use a squirt bottle, like a dawn bottle to cool off a small section of iron.

Tongs

Tongs should fit the piece of iron you are using. The most common mistake is that most blacksmiths expect one pair of tongs to work for everything.

The shorter the jaws and the longer the reins the harder the tongs will grip.

Vice Grips

Vice grips make a good punch and chisel holder.

Wire Brush Holder

Mount a old wire brush up side down near your anvil and set your wire brush in it.

Angle Grinder

Keep an angle grinder with a cutoff blade near your stock rack. It's easier to cut off a piece with the angle grinder than take a long piece to your cutoff saw.

Automatic Center Punch

It will make easier to make a more precise center punch

Drill Press and Grinder

Check drill press and grinder table for being square. The table can be off a fraction of an inch and make for less accurate holes and square grinding.

De-burr Steel

When you cut off a piece of iron with a cutoff saw take the time to grind off the sharp edge. It will keep you from getting cut and wearing out your gloves.

Harper's Finish

Mix 50-50 Linseed Oil, Zip Carwash and add about 10 percent Japan Drier

This makes a fairly good water proof finish.

