

## DVD REVIEW A-Z OF JOINTER SET UP & MAINTENANCE

With another DVD (or digital download) in his excellent series on machinery, Peter Sefton has established himself in tackling what's easily a dry, technical subject and making it essential viewing for woodworkers. In fact, he managed to keep my attention for just over two hours, which is admirable!

Beginning with choosing a jointer (surface planer), he points out that buying one can be a big investment, so correct setting up and maintenance is crucial to getting the best from it. Demonstrating with three different machines in his workshop (a 16in Felder, 12in Hammer and 10in Kity), it's good to see that much of the time he concentrates on the 20-year-old Kity planer, particularly when installing and setting new knives. More appropriate for the smaller home workshop, this model is still capable of producing a great finish, though is arguably more frustrating to set up than the other two.

### Planer anatomy

Under 'Machine Anatomy' he touches on three-phase convertors for bigger planers, isolator switches, motor ratings and power supplies, before a detailed breakdown of the major components: tables, fences, cutterblocks, knives and guards. He mentions boomerang guards (popular in the US and Australia), which are illegal here in Britain, and more unusual caterpillar guards for the rear of the block. There's some history here too, explaining how early planers from the Victorian era were so dangerous and noisy because of their square blocks.

I liked his simple method of checking bearings (using a coin on the table to detect vibration) and using a length of timber as an earpiece. Or simply marking the floor in a small workshop if you need to move a planer around. That way it's always returned to the same position where it's been set up accurately – important if the floor is not dead flat. For some planer problems he admits it's best to call out an engineer rather than faff around trying to correct a twisted table. On smaller machines just placing wedges on the floor can correct any slight twist, though.

### Tables & knives

Infeed and outfeed table heights relative to the cutterblock are examined in detail, with clear, active diagrams illustrating the effects. Peter suggests that slight snipe on your timber is worth living with if you're struggling to set the knives accurately. Having owned an identical Kity some years ago, I have to agree.

You realise how much easier it is to maintain a newer planer with easy-fit knives (such as the Felder), compared with the older Kity with traditional knives. Interestingly, he explains that the drift method (using pieces of wood) of adjusting new planer knives is more accurate and reliable than using dedicated magnetic setting gauges on the cutterblock, which obviously won't work with alloy tables anyway.

Infeed and outfeed table adjustments, cutter problems, diamond stone honing, even knowing when to change knives – are just some of the many maintenance aspects covered in depth. I'm sure many woodworkers with older planers will find the sequence on TCT spiral cutters of particular interest – easy to change, much quieter but much more expensive than traditional straight knives. We can always dream...

### Safety tips

Safety with any machine is paramount and there are some great tips here, such as crouching behind the outfeed table when switching on after fitting new knives. Or maybe scheduling a rough planing session (before final timber surfacing) when cutters are dull but before replacement.

There are no planing techniques as such, apart from correct hand positions. For more on this you'll need to watch subsequent videos. Whether buying your first planer or you've been machining timber for years, there's enough reliable information in this DVD for anyone to benefit. Tuition, presentation and camera work are all extremely professional, as usual. Highly recommended.



### THE VERDICT

Peter Sefton  
with Artisan Media

Price: £19.99

Web: [www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk](http://www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk)

Rating: 5 out of 5

## USEFUL KIT/PRODUCT PONY SPRING CLAMPS

They may be basic, but spring clamps are among the most useful hand tools in any workshop. From holding thin sheet material on top of a Workmate to more serious assembly work. This trio from Pony Jorgensen give some idea of the range available – a no-frills 2in capacity version, plus 3in and 4in sizes with coated jaw tips and grips. There's also a 1in model available.

Zinc-plated steel prevents corrosion, while each clamp has a sturdy spring to keep jaws tightly closed. Here, the two larger clamps have tips and handles sheathed in a tough plastic, which makes them easy to grip and protects the workpiece. Capacities are measured when clamps are fully open, meaning both jaws are parallel. Except you'll probably struggle to do



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this with the 4in version – I was unable to open it completely. Requiring both hands to operate, these springs are so powerful I was reminded of those old Charles Atlas bodybuilder adverts aimed at the scrawny weakling!

### Conclusion

You can buy cheaper spring clamps, but I've yet to find any as powerful as these fellas. Simple but unbelievably strong.

A sturdy spring keeps jaws tightly closed

### SPECIFICATION

Typical prices:  
£2.33 (2in bare)  
£4.31 (3in tipped)  
£9.95 (4in tipped)

Web: [www.rollins.co.uk](http://www.rollins.co.uk)

### THE VERDICT

#### PROS

- Straightforward, reliable clamping; huge pressure

#### CONS

- Both hands needed on 4in clamp

RATING: 4.5 out of 5