

## Tool Information

Congratulations! You are now the owner of the finest handcrafted woodcut tools made. To help you avoid some uncommon but disappointing problems such as chipped edges and broken blades, we want to pass along a few tips on the care of your new tools.

First, avoid dropping tools and always store your tools so they do not bang against each other. McClain's offers various tool carriers for the storage and transport of tools.

Second, keep the tools sharp. Cutting with a dull tool is difficult so one is tempted to force, twist or rock the tool. These actions put stress on the blade in a manner it was not designed to endure and it can break or chip. We recommend frequent use of an old-fashioned razor strop or leather honing block (available from McClain's) as the simplest means of keeping your tools sharp. Written instructions on sharpening with stones are available online. We can also send these tools back to Japan for professional sharpening. Please check the catalog, web site or call for details.

Third, be sure you understand how to hold and carve with these tools before using them.

**Cutting at too steep an angle can put too much stress on the smaller blades and cause them to break.** While the steel is strong, there is not much of it in the smaller tools. When you cut, the angle of the tool should never be greater than the angle of the bevel on the cutting edge of the tool, about 30°.

**Do not cut deeply with a single stroke when using 1.0 mm to 4.5 mm tools.** If the cut needs to be deep, work your way down with two or

three strokes, removing the wood gradually. **Never rock or force the blade through the wood.** If the blade jams, rocking or levering down on the handle can break or chip the blade. Instead pull the blade back out of the cut and continue cutting at a shallower angle.

Fourth, **never lend** your tools. We have found that this commonly leads to disaster with broken or chipped blades.

Finally, we recommend cutting down the handles on the *Namisei* (standard) and *Josei* (superior) tools so that the tools fit into the palm of your hand. This makes



carving easier and helps prevent broken blades.

**Place the tip of the blade at the tip of your longest finger and angle the tool toward the web between your first finger and thumb. Cut the tool to this length.** If in doubt, cut long; you can always cut the handle shorter.

These woodcut tools are not intended for use on hard surfaces, including plastic, masonite, end-grain wood, Resingrave®, plaster or metal. Only tools with a metal ferrule on the end of the handle are meant to be used with a mallet.

All the tools are inspected and tested by the manufacturer. We personally test each tool and add a protective plastic tube over the blade. Please inspect the tools BEFORE USING for possible damage during shipping.

We hope these tips will help you keep your tools in great shape so they give you many years of enjoyable use.



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