

Information Sheet 4

BASIC MAINTENANCE OF SANDING MACHINES

Sanding machines need little maintenance, but if their upkeep is ignored they will soon give problems. The following are basic procedures for maintaining a belt sander and a disk sander.

Belt sander

Check the platen. Most platens are composed of thin sheet of metal supported on a rubber or cork cushion. To check the platen:

- Release the tension
- Remove the belt
- Inspect the platen for signs of wear or cracks
- Carefully lift the metal sheet and check the condition of the cushion
- Remove any accumulated sanding dust as this will cause pressure points on the platen which will result in uneven sanding, if left too long, the dust accumulation will cause spots to wear through the platen
- Replace the belt if the old one is worn
- Apply tension, start the motor, and adjust the tracking

Check the condition of the rollers. Rollers tend to accumulate sanding dust. If left unchecked, the dust will build up until belt tracking is affected. Clean both the drive and the idler roller.

Check the condition of the fence. It should be free of burrs which could scratch your work, and it should operate freely. Remove burrs with a smooth file, and clean and lubricate all moving parts.

If you have trouble getting the belt to track properly, and if the rollers are clean, you can improve tracking by winding a few layers of masking tape around the center of the rollers. In effect, this will increase the crown of the rollers, and the belt will center itself on this highest point.

Disk removal and installation

There are a number of disc adhesives and methods for attaching disks on the market. The main characteristic is their ability to be removed and reused. The adhesive used in the Madison College lab is in a spray form and is applied to the abrasive disc. Since our Disk sander has two platens, we normally keep coarser grit on the north platen and a finer disc on the south platen (facing the classroom).

Removing the Disk from the platen:

1. To make disk removal easier, loosen the locking knob and carefully slide the tilting table away from the machine.
2. Remove the old abrasive disk from the platen. It may be necessary to use a putty knife to remove the old disk. Make sure there is no debris left on the steel platen as they will telegraph through the abrasive disk. If necessary, turn on the sander and, while the metal disk spins, press the squared end of a hardwood stick against the disk, moving the stick from the center of the disk to the outer edge. Sometimes it may be necessary to use solvent to dissolve excess residue.

Installing an Abrasive Disc to Disc Sander:

1. The disc adhesive is applied by spraying the adhesive on the back of the abrasive disk. Spray in one direction and then again perpendicular to the first path to ensure even coverage. Be sure to put newspaper down to catch the over spray. (Remember to clean the nozzle of the spray canister by holding it upside down for a couple of seconds while dispensing. This will prevent clogging.)
2. Carefully press the disk on to the platen, aligning the edges as closely as possible with the steel platen.
3. With the machine running, carefully press the end of a board into the disk moving from the center outward to ensure a good bond. Remember to move the wood only on the downward travel side of the platen.

All sanding machines

- check the table, fences and stops to make sure they are clean and polished
- remove rust spots and pitch marks with steel wool or silicon carbide sandpaper, then polish with paste wax
- lock the table at 90° to the face of the belt or disk, and set the pointer to zero
- check all controls and locks to see if they work smoothly, clean and lubricate as needed
- check the condition of all exposed electrical wiring and, if repairs are needed, have the job done by a qualified electrician