



ABOVE
Steps for creating and shaping wood polishing tools.

BELOW
An array of 600-grit polishing tools and a tube of 600-grit diamond paste

safety first – and always

- Always wear safety glasses and a dust mask while cutting.
- Always use water when cutting: never cut dry.
- Use care and common sense.

■ **Homemade Wood Polishing Tools** You can smooth and polish the grooves and depressions using very simple wood tools and diamond paste. The bad news is these wood tools are not available commercially, so you'll have to make your own. The good news is that they can be made inexpensively with minimal additional work on your part.

Begin with common 6 penny nails and short sections of maple wood dowel rods. Use a jeweler's saw to cut dowel rods of various diameters to length, and to remove the points and heads from the 6 penny nails to form shanks.

Use a #32 drill bit to drill a hole 1/4" deep into the center of one end of each dowel section to receive the nail shank, and epoxy a shank into each dowel.

Once the epoxy has cured, chuck the shank of the wood tool into your flex shaft. Then file, sand, and shape the tip to

the form required. A 6" hand file is useful for shaping the wood.

Generally, we shape our wood polishing tools to match the size and shape of the diamond bur we used to make the initial impression. Following traditional lapidary polishing methods, start with 600-grit diamond paste, then move on to 1200-grit diamond paste, and finish up with cerium oxide paste.

For instance, if we used a flame-shaped diamond bur, we'd make three separate flame-shaped wood tools, one each for 600- and 1200-grit, and the cerium oxide polish. To prevent mixing up the grits we color-code our metal shanks with nail polish, thus prevent cross-contamination: red for 600-grit, blue for 1200-grit and tan for the cerium oxide.

Diamond pastes of various grits are available through most lapidary suppliers in small syringes for about \$10 per syringe.

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PAGE
16

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PAGE
28

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