



9" DOVETAIL SAW KIT



Thank you for purchasing our dovetail saw kit. We hope you will find working from this kit to be a rewarding experience. When complete, we feel you will have a fine tool that will find a favored place in your toolbox, and provide a lifetime of service.

If you have any questions about the instructions, please email or call us.

ALWAYS WEAR EYE PROTECTION WHEN USING TOOLS

Gramercy Tools are designed & manufactured by the good people at:



112 26th St. Brooklyn, NY 11232
800.426.4613 & 718.499.5877

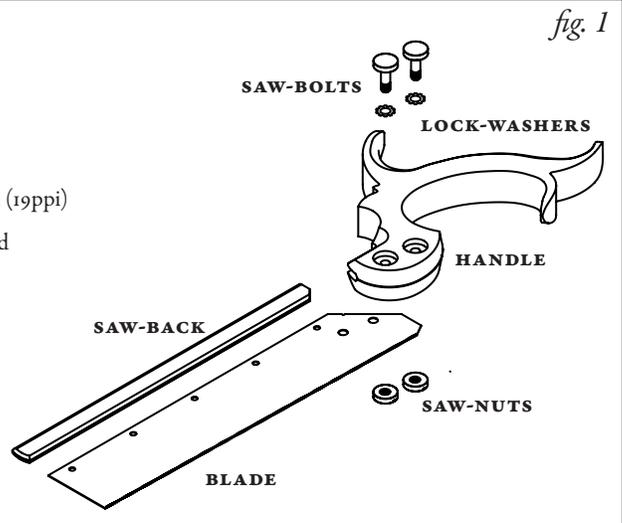
toolsforworkingwood.com

We hope you enjoy your saw. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Instructions

Your kit contains:

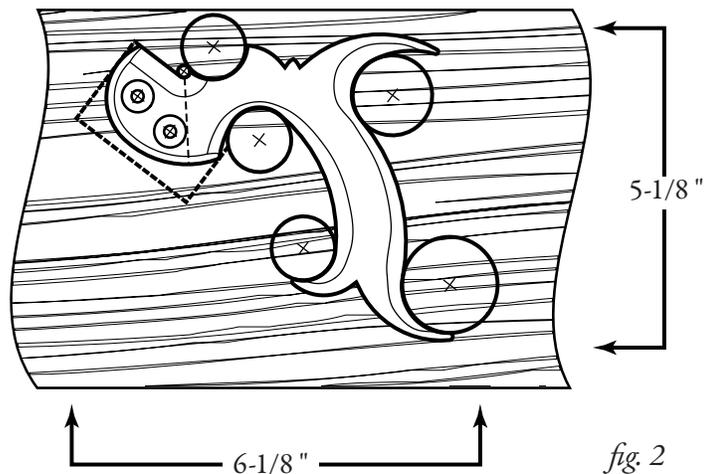
- Two brass **Saw-Bolts**
- Two brass **Saw-Nuts**
- Two phosphor bronze **Lock-Washers**
- A 9" **Blade**, drilled and pitched at 18tpi (19ppi)
- A brass **Saw-Back** folded and chamfered
- A paper handle template (page six)
- These instructions: please read all the way through before you start making your saw. All the instructions for building this kit apply to the handle design that is on the included template.



Wood Selection

You will need a piece of wood for the handle approximately 6-1/8" x 5-1/8." The piece should be a little thicker than 7/8" so that you have enough extra thickness for sanding and finishing. Orient the wood so that the grain runs through the thinner parts of the handle. (fig. 2) The handle template has a line indicating which direction the grain of the wood should be oriented. Proper grain orientation is important, and gives the handle the strength it needs.

A wide variety of wood species will yield a functional and beautiful saw handle. Almost any stable wood can work well. Traditional materials are quarter-sawn Beech and Apple wood.



You might want to practice by first cutting a handle or two out of scrap. The "letting in" operations that cut the slot for the **Saw-Back** and **Blade** can be tricky if it's your first time.

A full scale template of the saw handle we use on our saws can be found on page seven of this document. You can download and print additional templates from the copy of this document that is available on-line. Be sure to turn off any page scaling in your printer's driver settings before printing the Acrobat document (.pdf). There are dimensioned photoscales on the printout that you can check to ensure that the printout is the correct size.

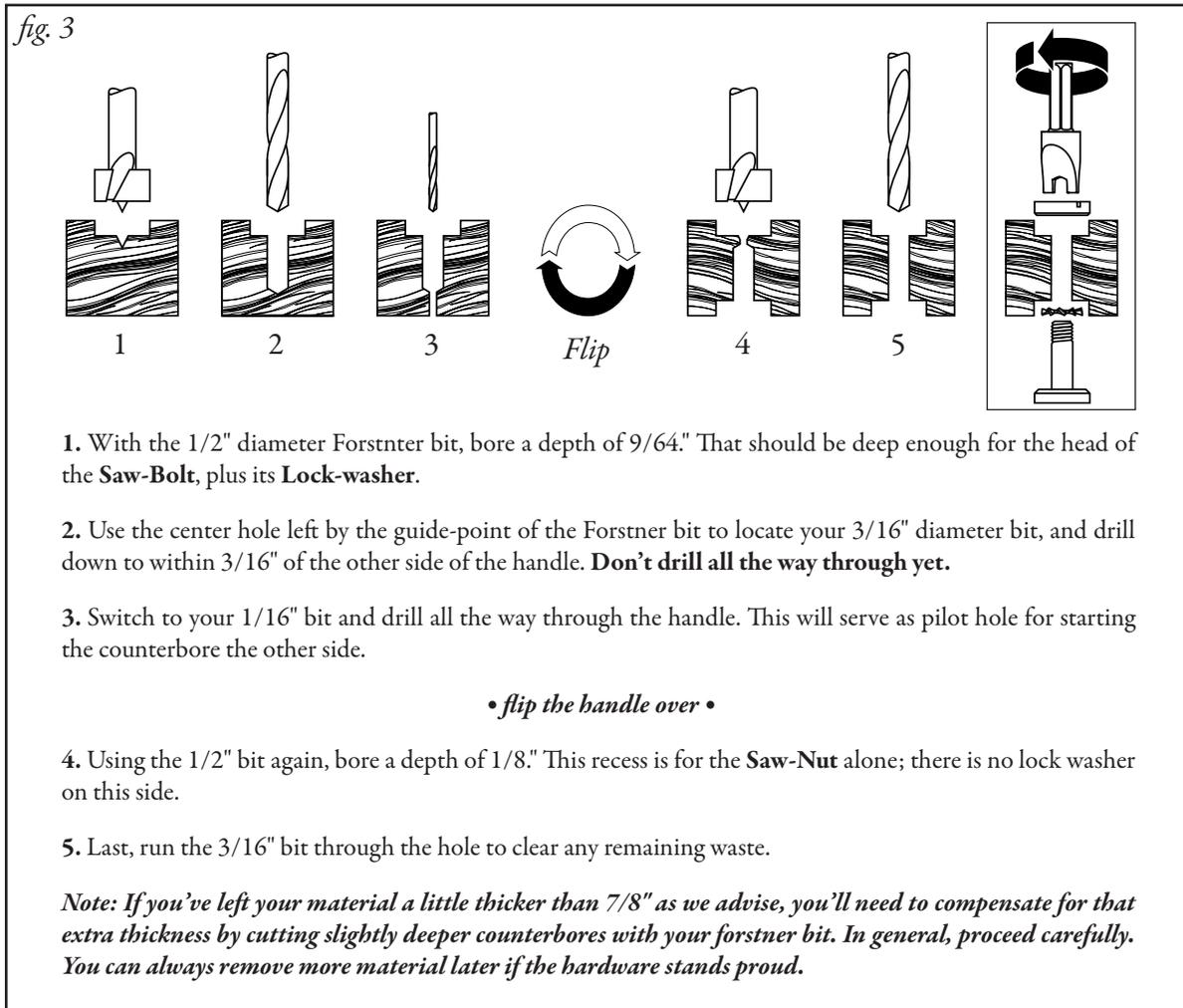
Attach the template to the wood. Paper patterns can shrink and buckle with exposure to water, so avoid water soluble glues in favor of rubber cement or some strong spray adhesive.

Drilling for the Saw Nuts

The first step in making the saw handle is accurately locating and drilling the holes for the mounting hardware. A drill press would be ideal for drilling the multiple concentric holes, but is not required. You'll need the following drill bits:

- 1/16" (or smaller) drill for piloting.
- 3/16" bit for the clearance hole for the **Saw-Bolt** shank.
- 1/2" Forstner or brad-point bit to counterbore for the nut and bolt heads.

Decide which side of the handle you wish to have the **Saw-Bolt** heads show. Carefully locate both holes for the saw from the template. These holes must line up with the corresponding holes in the saw **Blade**.



We suggest the method above (*fig. 3*), rather than simply starting with 1/16" pilot holes all the way through, because such thin drill bits can be very flexible and may not cut a straight and true hole through 7/8" of hardwood. Control over your drill depth is very also important here. In the absence of precision measuring equipment such as calipers or a depth micrometer, a tried-and-true strategy for fitting these parts together is to drill conservatively, then get to your target depth by twisting the bit by hand, test fitting as you go.

Roughing Out

Prior to shaping and sculpting the handle, you need to cut away most of the waste material. A bandsaw or a coping saw will work fine for this, as will the more traditional turning-saw. You can also use large drill bits or hole saws to cut the main circular curves of the handle (the big circles shown on the template) and then follow up with a saw to remove the rest.

- **Leave the reference block:** On the template, you'll notice a dotted line forming a box around the cheek. You'll want to leave this material in place, temporarily, so you have some good reference/clamping surfaces for all of the "letting in" operations described next. Try to cut out this box as squarely as possible.

Letting In

“Let in” or “inletting” are terms often used when describing how well a blade and saw-back fit into their handle. The steps required to make a tight, good-looking fit are delicate but straightforward. If you take your time and test your fit often, you should be in good shape.

BACK SLOT: The slot that receives the Saw-Back is approximately 3/16" wide, 25/64" deep, and about 1" long, but with 45° interior chamfers. There might be countless ways to achieve this complex interior shape, but the simplest way we can think of is to drill out as much waste as possible, then pare down to the final dimensions with sharp chisels.

- Scribe the slot width on your reference block.
- Using a 11/64" bit, drill one hole in the long direction, near the intended bottom of the slot.
- Now drill a series of holes in the short direction, clearing out most of the waste. Final fitting will be done after the slot for the saw Blade is cut.

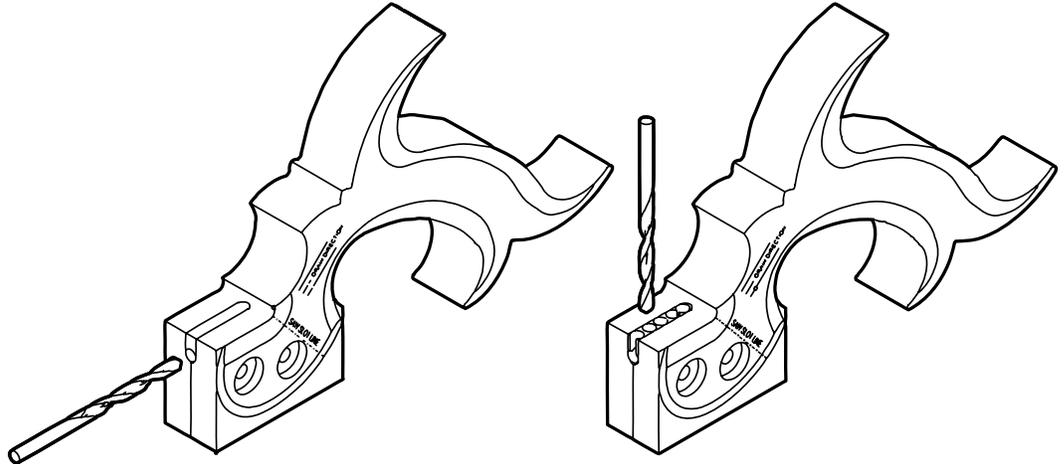


fig. 4

BLADE SLOT: Depending on what other saws you have at your disposal, the blade slot may be cut by a variety of means. Since the **Blade** is only 0.018" thick, it rules out many hand saws, and all but the thinnest band saws. We've had good results with some extra thin Japanese rip saws, but there you can run the risk of an undersized slot, which makes assembly quite difficult. In a pinch, you can actually use the **Blade** in your kit (which is probably the best course of action anyway). Here's how:

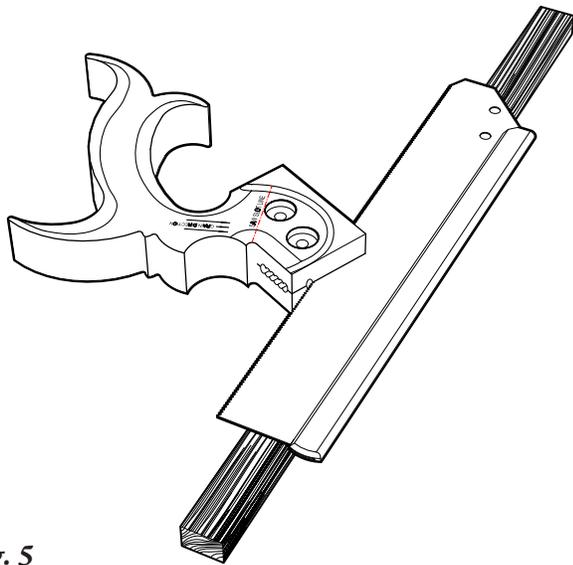


fig. 5

- Plane down some scrap to half the thickness of your handle, minus half the thickness of your Blade. With an exactly 7/8" thick handle that should be:

$$(0.875" \div 2) - (0.018" \div 2) = 0.4285"$$

Once again, don't forget if you're working with oversized stock. Adjust accordingly.

- Scribe a center-line around your reference block
- Place your scrap and your handle on a smooth, flat surface and rest the saw plate on the block.
- Bear in mind that the teeth should hang over the edge of the scrap because the teeth are set wider than the saw plate itself
- If your saw Blade teeth sit evenly over the center-line, proceed to cut. If not, you may need to plane down your scrap a little more, or shim it up with tape.

After you've cut your blade slot you can finish off the slot for the Saw-Back. Making some practice slots on scrap wood, or a practice handle, is highly advisable. In any case, you need to pare down the sides with a chisel to get to your final slot width, and you'll need a very thin chisel or V-gouge to cut in the chamfers.

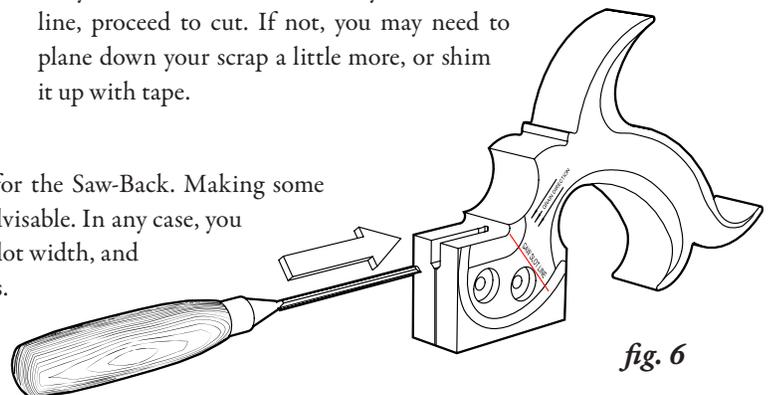


fig. 6

Shaping Up

When you are satisfied with how your **Blade** and **Saw-Back** fit into the handle, it's time to start in on the shaping and rounding of the various handle features and decorations (aka: the fun part). Cut off the reference block and then contour as desired.

- Good rasps are excellent for shaping and sculpting. A traditional tool for rounding the graceful interior curves of saw handles is the *Saw Handlemaker's Rasp*, which is available from Gramercy Tools. It's similar to a cabinetmaker's half round rasp, but it has no teeth on the flat side, and the point curls inward, enabling the user to rasp the inside of a closed handle without digging the point into the opposite side.
- "Shop roll," or cloth-backed abrasive strips, held taut, are an excellent way to round and sand handles. Often they can be split or torn lengthwise to finish tight curves and narrow spaces.
- Triangular, or "three-square" needle files are used on our production handles for the decorative notches. Notches such as these are traditional saw handle ornamentation, and serve to personalize as well as refine the look of a handle. In some cases, the size, shape, and placement of these can help to date an antique or identify the maker.

Final Assembly

Insert the blade/back assembly into the handle, and with a **Lock-Washer** on each **Saw-Bolt**, insert the screws into the saw handle. Thread on the **Saw-Nuts** from the other side and tighten them up a test fit. If the bolts do not slide into place with ease, it could be for any combination of the following of reasons:

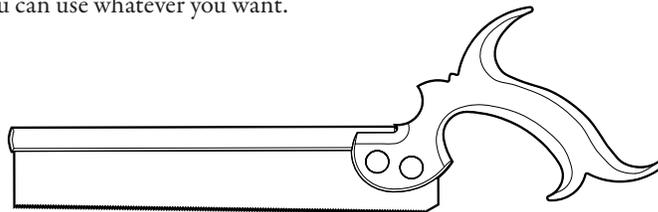
- **There's interference in the rest of your assembly.** This is the likeliest reason. Try to align the **Blade** holes with the handle holes by inserting an awl or a piece of steel rod, or the taper of a machinist's scribe. If that doesn't work, you may need to cut the blade slot a little deeper. You shouldn't have to cut anything out of the back-slot at this time. If the back-slot is too shallow in either direction, the **Saw-Back** will simply ride high. You can correct this at any time.
- **The holes are a little undersized.** Depending on the make of your bit and any wear it may have sustained, your drill could cut a hole smaller than its nominal diameter. If you have a set of straight reamers, or even a bit of sandpaper rolled up tightly, you can enlarge the hole diameters until the **Saw-Bolts** fit.
- **There's interference between the hole patterns.** If the distance between the holes on the **Blade** does not match the distance between the holes on the handle, you could have a tough time forcing the **Saw-Bolts** in. If the interference is minor, you may be able to twist the **Saw-Bolts** in until the threads are past the blade stock, then force them the rest of the way home. Don't try to force the bolts in if you can't get the threads past the **Blade**. At the very least, you'll bungle the threads. You may even crack the cheek. Because the holes in the handle have to remain concentric with their counterbores, the easiest way to correct for interference here is by adjusting the holes in the **Blade** with a round needle file. Proceed slowly. If you remove too much material there is a chance your blade will wobble in its mount.

Tighten the **Saw-Nuts**: If you do not have a purpose made split nut driver you can make one from a bit of steel or a screwdriver with a gap ground in the middle. Gramercy Tools offers a split nut screwdriver tip made specially for our saw nuts. It's got a standard hexagonal shank so it will fit in a wide variety of bit holders. (Around the shop, we use them in our spiral ratchet screwdrivers.) A moderate amount of torque will be required to bed the **Lock-Washer** in.

Finishing Up

A conventional way of finishing off a fine hand saw is to sand down the faces of the handle, while the saw is fully assembled. This has the effect of making the hardware perfectly flush with the with surface of the handle, leaving uniform, parallel scratches in the brass. You may also prefer to polish the brass components prior to assembly with a little buffing compound and a wheel. As always, wear eye protection.

When you are totally satisfied with the shape and fit of your assembly, It's time to apply the finish. Our production saws are finished with oil and wax. Of course, you can use whatever you want.

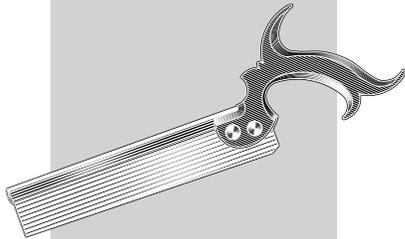


We hope you enjoy building your saw. Please take a look at the other saw kits we have available.

As always, we can be contacted via our website or over the phone if you should have any questions or comments.



9" DOVETAIL SAW



Thank you for purchasing a Gramercy Tools Dovetail Saw. When you use this saw with the right technique, you'll have the same advantages that enabled early 19th century craftsmen to work fast and efficiently, even when they were just starting out as apprentices.

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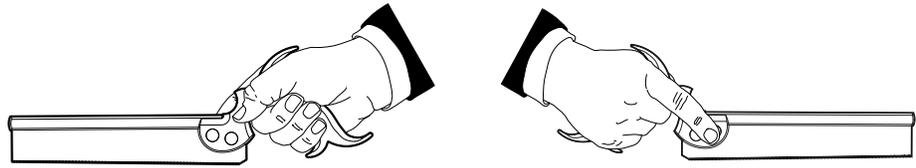
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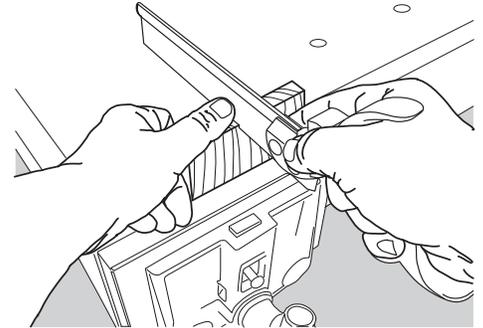
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We hope you enjoy your saw. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Holding the Saw: The handle is designed to ensure your hand is correctly positioned for comfortable sawing, even for extended periods. Hold it like a pistol, with the index finger outstretched. Only three fingers curl under the handle. If you try to wrap all four fingers around it, it's easy to clench a fist, which leads to cramping and loss of control. For these reasons, the handle is designed for the three-fingered grip shown below. The handle should sit snugly in the upper part of your hand so you can easily control the saw with your thumb and forefinger. This is the key to accurate sawing.

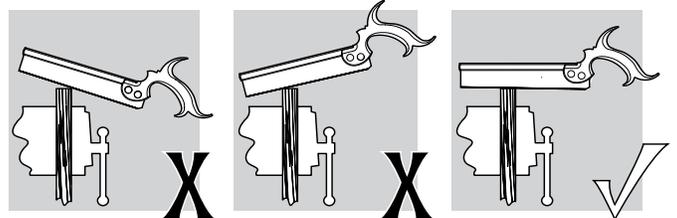


Clamping the Work: To minimize vibration, clamp as close as you can to the intended cut, leaving room, of course, to complete the cut without re-clamping or crashing into your vise. Ideally, you want to be able to rest the saw so that the teeth lay evenly across top of the wood, and there find yourself standing comfortably close to the work, so you can check your progress on both sides of the wood as you saw.



Starting the Cut: Many who experience difficulty starting saws wind up resorting to an array of preparatory efforts. Some draw the blade backwards to score a notch before starting; others may chisel a trench along the waste side of the cut. Discarding these old habits, we've found simply advancing the saw with the teeth resting on the wood works great for a consistent start. Since the saw has a canted blade and is so finely toothed, forward motion is all you need to get going. In the case of people accustomed to other dovetail saws, we've noticed there is a tendency to use too much downward pressure and tense up. Here's a method of starting that works well with the Gramercy Dovetail Saw:

- *Rest the toe of the saw (the tip away from the handle) where you want to cut, usually on the waste side of a scribed line, just glancing the line. Hold the saw level, the teeth just resting flat all along the top surface to be cut.*



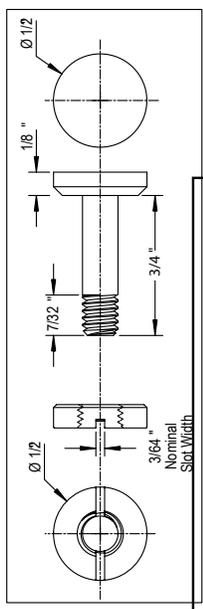
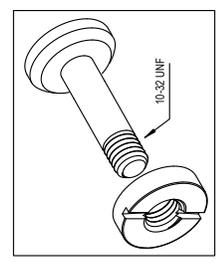
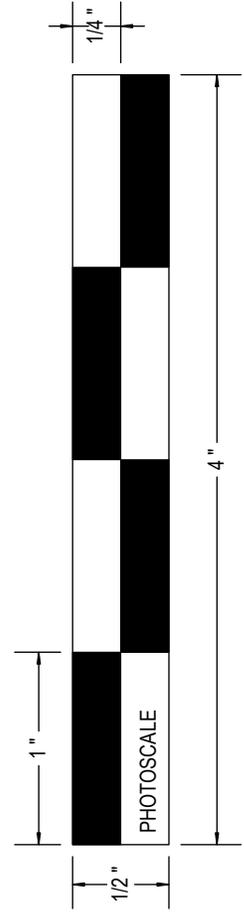
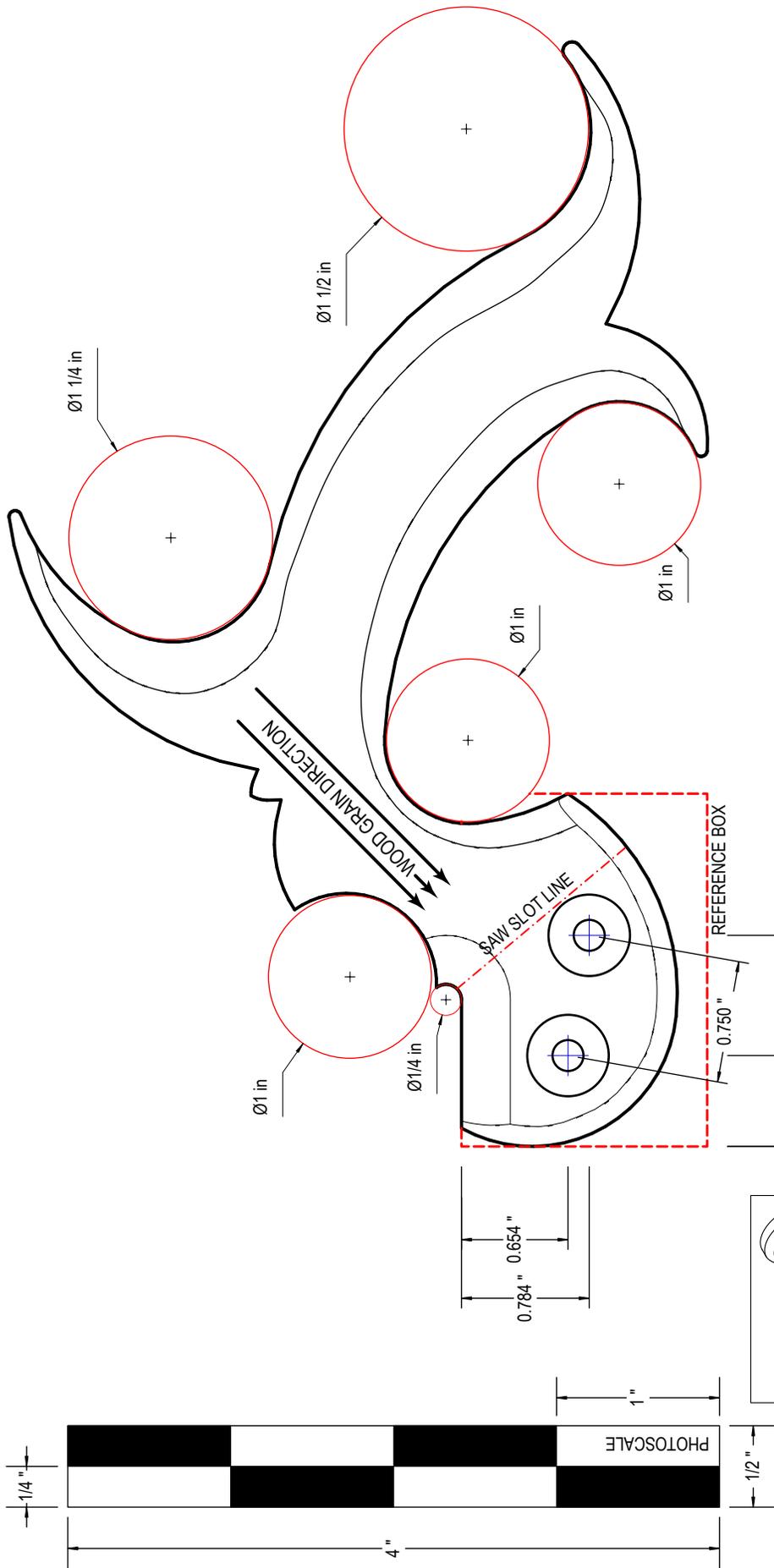
- *Using no downward pressure, relax and push the saw straight forward, starting the cut. If you tense up or tilt the saw up or down on the work, the saw might jam. This method doesn't work well with coarse toothed saws, but with a fine, 19ppi saw, it works great.*

- *With the first stroke done, ease up even more, and return the saw to the starting position, keeping the saw in the kerf just made. Do another stroke the same way, easily, relaxed, with no pressure. The saw blade is thin, so if you start cutting askew, the blade will bend and bind in the cut. Be attuned to that feedback and you will quickly learn to saw straight. **Relax your hand and your body, and just pay attention to the saw.***

- *If you've never cut dovetails before, go slowly and carefully. Try to remove a tiny bit, but not all of your layout lines. With practice, you'll gain speed, but it's important to give yourself and your muscles a chance to develop the correct technique.*

Finishing the Cut: The blade of the saw is slightly canted, so you should reach your target depth at the front of the board (side facing you) first. Slow down and tilt the saw into the cut a little to level off. Always take full, comfortable strokes. With a little experience, you should just graze your front and back scribe lines at the same time. Successful sawing for dovetails means learning to saw square to the wood and at a consistent angle. Consistency and speed come with practice.

A Note on Sharpening:
Eventually, with enough use, a saw will dull and need sharpening. We recommend a long, triangular Swiss needle file for sharpening your Gramercy Tools Dovetail Saw. After repeated sharpening, the teeth will need to be set. Neither of these activities is hard to do, but on a saw with teeth this small we do not recommend it as a beginner's sharpening project. We offer a saw sharpening service at a nominal charge. See our website for more details.



TOOLS FOR WORKING WOOD

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TITLE	SCALE	WORK SAFELY:
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PART	DATED	WWW.TOOLSFORWORKINGWOOD.COM
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