



### How To Use A Crosscut Saw

So you think you know how to handle a saw, eh? Far be it from us to say no; but we know of many experienced, handy people who claim that, without instruction, it took them years before they got the knack. But, we know the knack, and we can teach it to you in the next few minutes.

The crosscut saw is devised to cut perpendicular or across the grain of a piece of wood. There are two types: the handsaw (Fig. 3A) and the backsaw (Fig. 3B), which has a piece of steel vulcanized to the top of the blade. The handsaw is used primarily for basic cutting, while the backsaw is for more intricate cutting on smaller pieces of wood and moldings. However, both saws are operated identically: if you learn how to use one, you learn how to use the other.

Because they are precision tools, both saws should be kept clean and sharp at all times and stored in a cool, dry place.

#### Utensils

Handsaw, 11 points per inch  
Backsaw, 14 points per inch

#### Ingredients

Plank of wood  
Paraffin wax

1. Grip handle of saw in your dominant hand and hold securely as shown in Figure 3C.
2. Place piece of wood on a low bench. If you are right-handed, the wood should extend over the right side of the bench. If you are left-handed, wood should extend over left side of bench.
3. Rest opposite knee (left, if right-handed; right if left-handed) on the plank as shown in Figure 3D.
4. Now grasp edge of board with inactive hand as shown, and lean the saw against the thumb of that hand.
5. Having placed the heel of the saw against your thumb, draw the saw upward toward you. Keep your wrist stiff as you pull, and allow your elbow to bend to its maximum. In this position, your shoulder should also be kept loose, so the arm, from the shoulder to the elbow, can swing like a pendulum.
6. Now that there is a groove in the wood, slide your inactive hand a few inches away from the cut, but maintain its grasp.
7. With the toe of the saw in the groove, slide the saw forward

gently, still holding the wrist rigidly. A loose wrist will make for a crooked cut.

Note: Hardly any pressure should be exerted on the saw, and especially not on the back stroke. The weight of the saw itself, plus the pendulumlike motion of your arm, will do all the work. If saw binds, rub paraffin wax on both sides of saw teeth.

8. Now saw through the wood, gaining momentum as you go. Try to master the pendulum swing, as this takes the pain out of sawing. If your line is crooked, you haven't got it yet.
9. Keep sawing until you are just about across the wood. Reach your inactive hand over to the end of the plank, which is about to fall, and continue sawing very slowly, so that when you cut through, the wood will not splinter.
10. Repeat these steps with both handsaw and backsaw until you have become proficient.

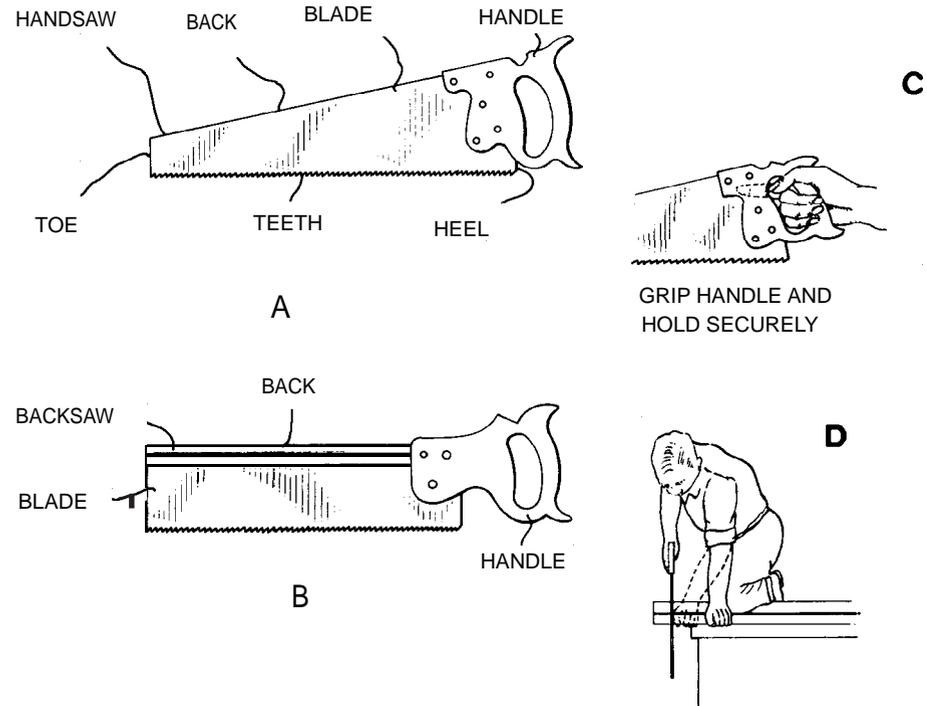


Figure 3.  
Crosscut Sawing