

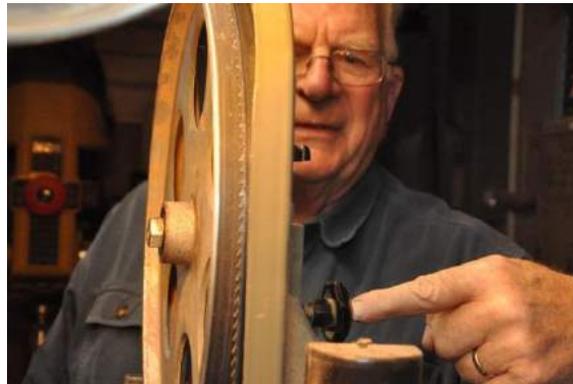
BASIC BANDSAW SETUP

Submitted by **Greg Potter**

This past month I had the opportunity to visit **Jerry Holbrook's** shop and the topic of cutting blanks on the band saw came up. I have not had great success using my own band saw. Mainly I would have issues with the blade wandering while cutting. Jerry shared with me the following setup tips, and sure enough when I followed them at my home shop my band saw issues were corrected.

Always Safety First! Make sure the band saw is unplugged prior to making blade and guide adjustments.

1. **BLADE POSITION ON THE TOP TIRE (TRACKING)** – The blade should ride centered on the top tire, too far forward or too far back can make for a poor cut and risk the blade jumping off the wheel. With some tension on the blade adjust the top wheel tilt and manually advance the top wheel until the blade is riding in the correct position, then lock down the tilt of the top wheel.



2. **BLADE TENSION** – Here are three ways to determine if you have the correct tension on your blade. You can rely on your favorite method, or use any combination of the three. Note: When the saw is not in use you should release the tension on the blade to prolong blade life and prevent blade memory. Releasing and resetting tension should not require resetting of the guides, which will be covered later.

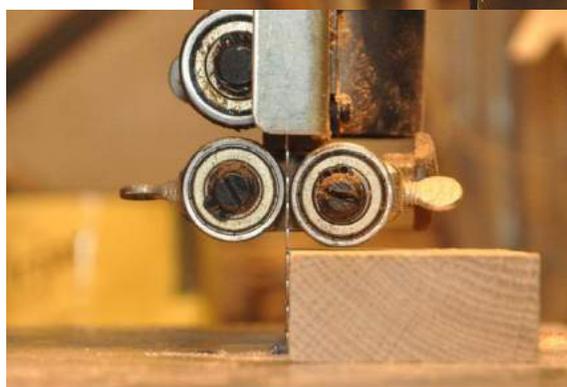
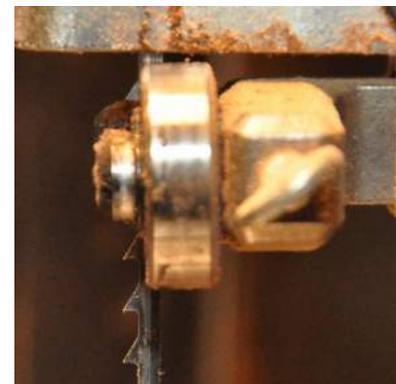
- a. **The Tension Gauge** – On the back of many band saws under the tension adjustment knob is a tension gauge, there should be marks on the gauge for recommended spring position depending on blade size. Twist the tension knob until the spring mark is set at the recommended position. If your machine doesn't have a gauge or if you are concerned about its accuracy you can try either of the following.



- b. **Twang** – For those with good ears you can determine tension by the sound the blade makes when you flick it with your finger. Give the tension knob a few twists then flick the blade and listen to the pitch of blade vibration; you should be seeking a “twang”.
- c. **Flutter Test** – Another method for setting tension is to open up the blade guides, turn on the band saw, and then look at the blade for flutter. If the blade flutters back and forth increase the tension. Blades should run in a straight line with no visible side to side flutter.

3. **BLADE GUIDES** – Typically there will be two sets of blade guides on a saw, the upper set which is mounted at the end of the guidepost and a lower set that is below the table. These guides can be rollers or blocks, the guide positioning should be the same for either style.

- a. First set the side guide position so that the front of the guides comes just to the back of the blade gullet (deepest area on the blade between the teeth).
 - b. Set the side guide distance from the blade. The guides should be set close, but not touching the blade. General rule is you should be able to slide a dollar bill between the blade and the guides (or a five if that is all you have handy!).
 - c. Adjust the thrust (rear) guide the same way. Again this guide should be as close to the blade as it can be without actually touching the blade.
 - d. Repeat this process for the lower guides. This step may be easier if you remove the table.
4. With your guides now positioned you should be ready to get to sawing. The last adjustment to make is to set the height of the guidepost relative to the size piece you are working with. The guidepost should be set so that the work piece will just clear the bottom of the post.



SUMMER POTLUCK – AUGUST 1

Greg Potter and his wife **Heather Muckley** (and **Ian**) would also like to host a **Summer Woodturners Potluck (aka Pott-Muck)** at the Potter Family Camp in Altmar across from the Salmon River Reservoir.

WHEN: Saturday, August 1, 2015
Bring a dish to pass and a chair

Start Time: TBA – Lunch noon
B.Y.O.B.



Before lunch, **Chad Dawson** is going to lead a tree identification walk through the woods, demonstrate the proper way to drop a tree, and show off some fancy chainsaw ripping.

If someone would rather go fishing all morning and just join in for the food and conversation that's okay too.

Please RSVP to hmuckley@yahoo.com for directions.