



FILING ROOM MAINTENANCE
by -JAY ERICKSON

With Permission from the Western Saw Filers Educational Association

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I'm in a rather unique position. The type of business that I do is no different than you fellows are doing. The position I have is that I don't take care of one mill, I have five or six of them, and I have to do the same things to my mills that you do, to keep them running. But this also gives me the opportunity to see many different kinds- of cutting applications, and different machines, and taking care of them has helped me a lot.

There are two areas I want to discuss that have a lot to do with machine maintenance in the filing room, primarily: Precision and Wear.

The first thing I'm going to bring up is that we've had previous speakers telling about setting up grinding machines in relationship to the grinding wheel over the saw. There are many different ways of getting this alignment. This is the type of precision that I'm referring to. We all have good methods, but the thing I want to bring up is that before the grinding wheel is lined up square, and the saw guide, the track underneath it, lined up, and then I line the face plate of the grinder up the feed finger travel. After the faceplate is lined up with the travel of the feed finger, then everything else I do as far as my line-up on the saw, is done from the face plate.

I think the best advice I've ever heard came from a fellow filer who's been at it a long time, he told me that whatever you do in the filing trade, there are three words of utmost importance and they are: level, square, and plumb. I work off of them all the time. That's the only way I can have any real success, because of the great number of saws that we put over our grinders in a day's time.

With precision maintenance, we use tools for checking: squares, micrometers, levels and others. Something that's exact. Usually when we're having a problem that comes from this area, it's simple to find. You can take care of it right away.

But in the second area: wear, it's my opinion that this is the thing that's most overlooked, and sooner or later it causes more trouble than precision maintenance, because it's harder to find where your problems are. If let go too long it soon gets to be a big problem. You have to spend a lot of time, and go back and check through so many things to find out just what it is that is causing the problem.

I'd like to mention a few of the parts that I think ought to be checked periodically, to help eliminate problems. I know most of us, as busy as the mills keep us, don't usually take care of something until it starts to become a problem. That's when things usually get done. But you can check and avoid problems before they happen by changing and putting on new parts.

The cone pivot points on top of the grinder is one area that I'm kind of ashamed of because a year or so ago, I had problems with lining up one of our grinding wheel arbors over a saw. The swage was getting a little bit heavy on one side and I was trying to blame it on the fitters but when I finally got into the pivot points, two were worn in half. They weren't even cones anymore. It was a wonder the wheel didn't fall off. You might look for things like this.

Swage bars and anvils, you all are well aware of how they get worn, but they ought to be checked periodically. The cutting tooth is the name of the game, and without the fitting on your saws, I don't think it matters what kind of a bench job you have if you don't have good fitting you aren't going to come out. A good fitting job will cover some of the things that get passed over on the bench. But they can't pass over things on the bench when you have a bad fitting job. It's going to show up as soon as they get that saw on the mill.

I use carbide on the anvils and on the clamp screws on all our swages. I get a lot better wear. You have to be a little more careful with them because they are subject to breakage, and when they're broken you're out of business. But they've worked out well. It's worth the extra expense of going carbide, with the number of saws we do. But the same point is still there, that they last that much longer, but then again you've got to take care of them. They can't be overlooked and taken for granted.

Sharper tooth stops, I find, are real prone to get extra little notches worn in them, and pretty soon the fitters are fighting the shaper and trying to get it down in the right spot. They don't cost much and to take care of a simple thing like that, that's part of the job of being a head filer, or fitter, keeping the parts workable.

Now, getting to cams. I've been asked out to different mills under different circumstances when they were in trouble, and have run into a lot of situations. I want to tell you about something that happened one time when I was asked to go into a mill and see if I could help out. They were having trouble holding the swage on their gangs, and they weren't getting any run out of them. They were making a lot of extra changes, which is all money to a sawmill. The fitters were getting worked to death. They were swaging every change because they couldn't pullout much, and shaping just a little bit so that they didn't get much of a cup in trying to make those gangs run. Well, they had their shapers and swages all out of kilter, trying to keep up with this problem. I finally got down to the cams. I don't know how long that filing room had been in there, but I bet those cams had never even been looked at. You can look at any grinder and usually the cam roller doesn't exactly line up with the cam, causing offset wear on the cam.

You can see the wear areas, especially when you're lifting the feed roller off the cam bottom to get your gullet depth, and then having it slap the cam instead of the cam roller following the cam all the way around. It was these circumstances that were putting a hollow place right behind the swage on the top of the tooth. Well, the more they swaged the tooth, the more prone it was to being broken off. So the first thing I did was order a new set of cams. I built up the cam a little bit to get them by. Within two days after chang-

ing the swage and shaper to where they belonged, pulling out some swage and getting a shoulder behind the tooth that I think ought to be. The fitters started having a lot more time to do the things that before they couldn't do because of this problem that the cam was giving them.

I work carbide in where I can because of its wear properties. It doesn't have good shock resistance, so I don't try to put in under those circumstances. I run carbide on the feed fingers. I run a pointed feed finger that pushes on the inside of the cup, because under heavy-swaging operations a knife-edge causes the swage to split out. So I point it a little bit and that eliminated the splitting. But everyday things such as leveling hammers and tension gauges ought to be checked. And yet, some of the mills that I've been in- that I've been asked to go into to help out, haven't spare parts for obvious things that wear out. Well, I think they're letting themselves down and they're letting their employers down, by not stocking their own spare parts. You have to keep the mill running. It's cheap insurance, having spare parts.

I consider faceplates one of the greatest wear areas. They can get you into bad trouble. It's right there, working for you all the time, every time you put a saw on the grinder, that saw is going against that face plate, and whatever the face plate is set for, that's what you're going to get out of the grind on the saw. A worn faceplate will cause grinding wheel chattering, machine vibrations, and more '- swage on one side than the other. You can't line up the grinding wheel over the saw and get it to stay accurate, because a worn face plate isn't level or square. Some of the manufacturers are putting out chrome face plates. I think that's a darn good thing to do, to slow down the wear.

I want to mention stretcher rolls. There's not actually too much that can go wrong with a stretcher roll, but I have a little story I want to tell. The other day I was in the filing room, the head filer told me he'd been having a problem with his stretcher roll. It seems that when making long rolls, after about fifteen minutes, the motor would kick off. Well, he went with that for a while, supposing it might be electrical. Pretty soon he couldn't make any roll at all, the motor was kicking off and the rolls weren't doing much to the saw either.

He started checking for a frozen bearing or something, and he happened to notice that the top roll looked awfully flat. When he checked it further, it was flat from edge to edge. I told him that was the sort of thing I'd like to talk about here today. He said, "Don't tell them who it was because I've been filing for 36 years". He said, "You know, I felt ashamed about those flat rollers, but I wasn't worried because I knew we had a spare set." He knew it because he'd been kicking them around for about five years. When he finally found them, the box hadn't been opened yet. He got it opened, pulled them out, and realized that he'd packaged them up because they were worn out five years ago, but had never sent them off to be ground!

I know that you're all very proud of what you're doing. I know I am. And we have so many responsibilities shoved on us now that it's hard to cover ourselves everywhere. But I think that maybe once in awhile, if you get it in your mind a little bit to check a few worn parts, you'll have fewer problems. There aren't that many, that it's going to cramp

you for time. Cover yourself by checking for worn parts, you'll be a lot more successful. To wait until things go wrong is to get into problems that have multiplied themselves and you don't know where to go to find out where the problem is. I'm going to continue having problems just like that, overlooking things. We all will. But maybe next time we can remember to take a couple of minutes to look around and check things. I'd like to conclude by saying that in a quad or a gang machine or a multi-saw edger, the machine is no better than the worse saw in it.

