

## Hand Saw Cleaning and Rust Removal

Bob Page April 24, 2019

After cleaning and sharpening over 200 saws in the last few years, I've developed a process for cleaning metal parts that works very well. More photos will be added in the near future.

**For brass screws and medallions:** Soak them overnight in a 1:4 solution of liquid laundry soap and water. I use Tide Free and Gentle, as it seems to work better than other products. The laundry soap will clean away oils, dirt, and much of the oxidation without leaving an over-polished surface. The final cleaning is done by brushing with a fine brass wire brush, which leaves a clean, soft finish that is not too shiny.



**For saw plates:** I recommend wearing gloves to keep your hands clean, as the process can get quite messy. First, carefully scrape away the majority of the rust and dirt with a single edged razor blade or a sharp chisel. Round over the corners with a fine stone so they do not dig into the metal and cause scratches.



Next, use 400 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper on a hard rubber block to sand the remaining rust from the plate. I like to use Simple Green cleaner to lubricate the plate. It is safer than mineral spirits and not messy like oil. It also smells much better. Plus, when the saw cleaning is done, just spray down your work area with more Simple Green and wipe away the mess. I generally stop at 400 grit after the plate is clean, but you can go to 600 grit if you'd like a little more polish.

The next step is to rub the plate with a burgundy Scotch Brite pad, which gets down into the grooves on the surface of the metal and pulls out the remaining dirt and rust. The final step is to polish with Autosol metal polish on a cotton cloth. Finish up with a coat of paste wax. The brand does not matter as long as it does not contain silicone.



By the way, I never use Evaporust, citric acid, or any other aggressive chemical on saw parts. I do not like the finish these leave and some may actually cause damage to the metal.

Here are a couple of before and after shots of a Bishop rip saw that was cleaned using this process. The handle was lightly sanded and finished with Tru-Oil.

