

Tormek T-7 Product Review by Kurt Hertzog

I can't remember how many years I've owned my Tormek Supergrind 2000. I do remember purchasing it from my local Rockler store and how I began my mission to sharpen every edge I could find in the house and shop. The days of the bench stone were numbered once I learned how to use the Tormek. Over the years, I've used it not only for myself but for countless classes on sharpening. This included demos and instruction on the Tormek itself along sharpening generically and for my woodturning classes. The Tormek has held up well over the many years and in particular with the many users. Not all of them as skilled or as careful as I might have wished. The precision of the Tormek has remained a constant in praise of the design and sturdy construction. Other than the occasional cleaning of the drive system, it has been maintenance and repair free.



My original Tormek after these many years of service is fully functional and capable. A testament to its design and construction after the long service it has provided.

I may be late to the party but the newest of the Tormek sharpening systems is out. The Tormek T-7 builds on the strengths of the predecessor with a few changes that will please. Gone is the green color on the steel framework replaced with a brighter and cheerier blue. The unit itself seems smaller (actually the same as before) and lighter yet retains all of the functionality of the earlier version.



The new Tormek T-7 sports a new color system. Seemingly smaller and lighter yet maintaining all of the original capabilities, it is a cheerier and brighter blue color.

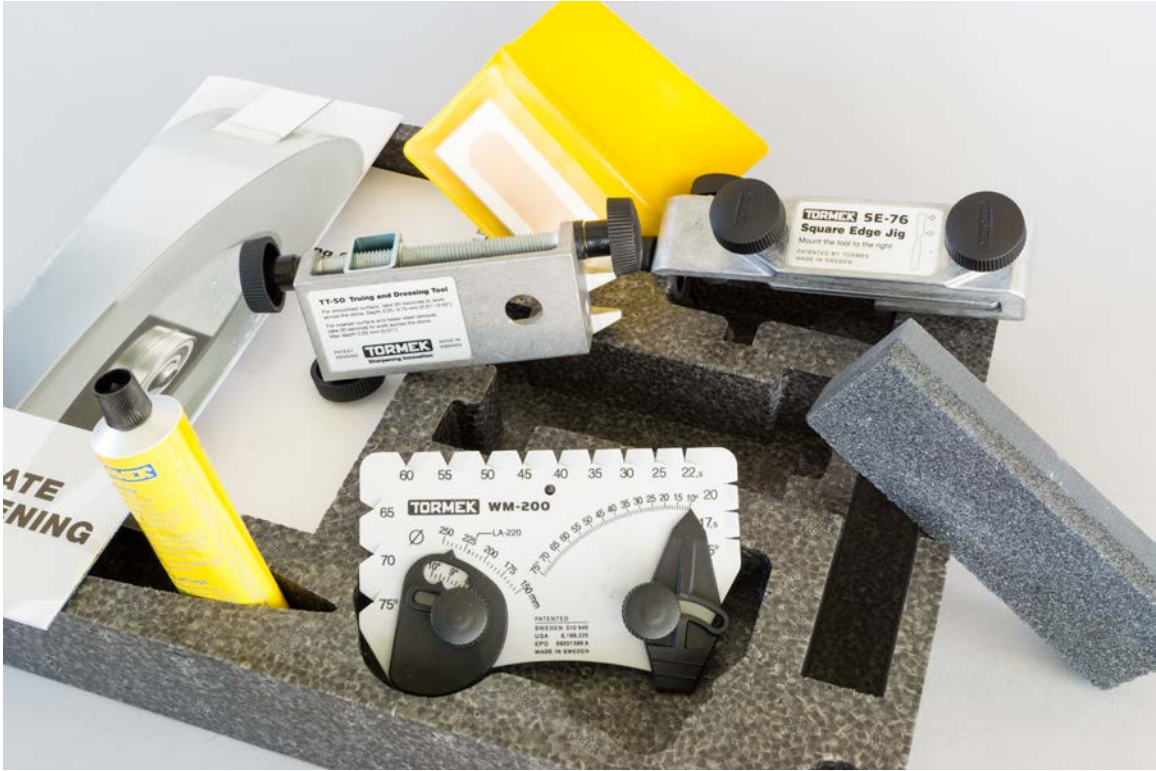
The Tormek is packaged for shipment right from the factory with ample padding and a packaging engineers efforts readily apparent. With all of the components fully nested and protected, it is ready for nearly anything it should encounter in any reasonable shipment process.



The top level of packaging includes honing compound, grinding stone, jigs and adjustment fixture along with instruction books and DVD.



Not only is there a superb instructional DVD but also a useful quick start booklet and a comprehensive manual thoughtfully bound in a ring binder for fold open flat use.



The original Tormek was supplied with a grinding stone, adjustment fixture, and a square edge jig. The T-7 comes equipped with a truing and dressing tool. A great addition to the base kit.



Just a few of the jigs that I've added to my system over the years. I sharpen everything in my shop and home including plane irons, bench chisels, carving and turning tools, kitchen cutlery and scissors. Every jig and fixture I've bought is fully usable on the new system.

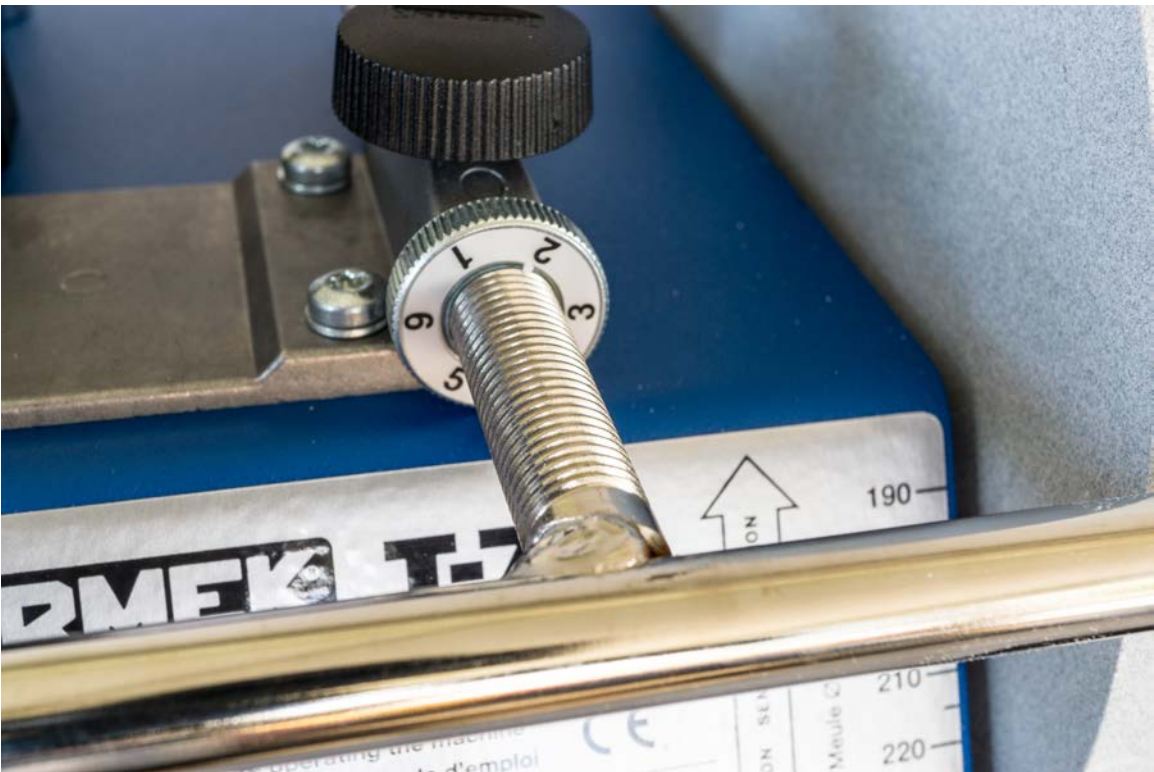
While the water tray has changed, for the better I might add, all of the other Tormek accessories, jigs, and fixtures are still usable. The additions that you may have added to your original system, if you owned one, will be fully functional on your new unit. If this is your first Tormek water cooled sharpening system, you may be interested in purchasing one of the various packages they offer for different disciplines or adding the various sharpening jigs as you find need.



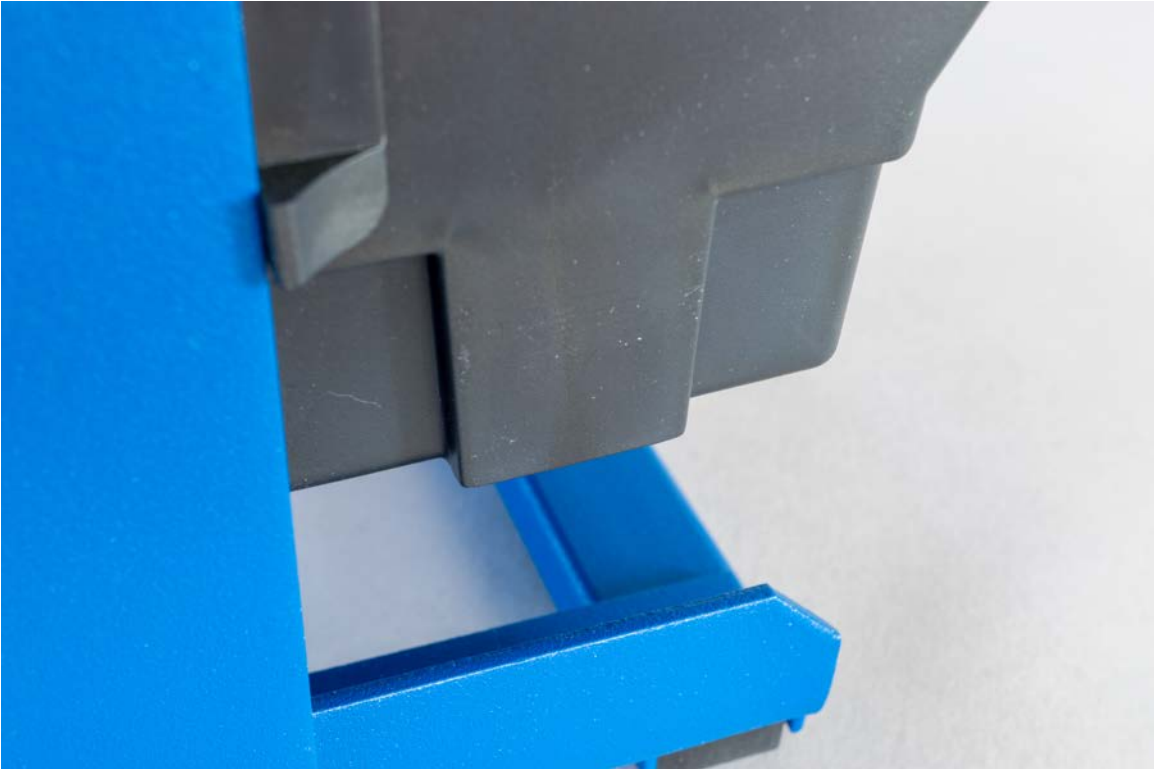
The new Tormek T-7 assembled and nearly ready for use. The new blue color and the seemingly smaller footprint make this unit discernable from the old. All of the same features and functionality but in a smaller and lighter package.



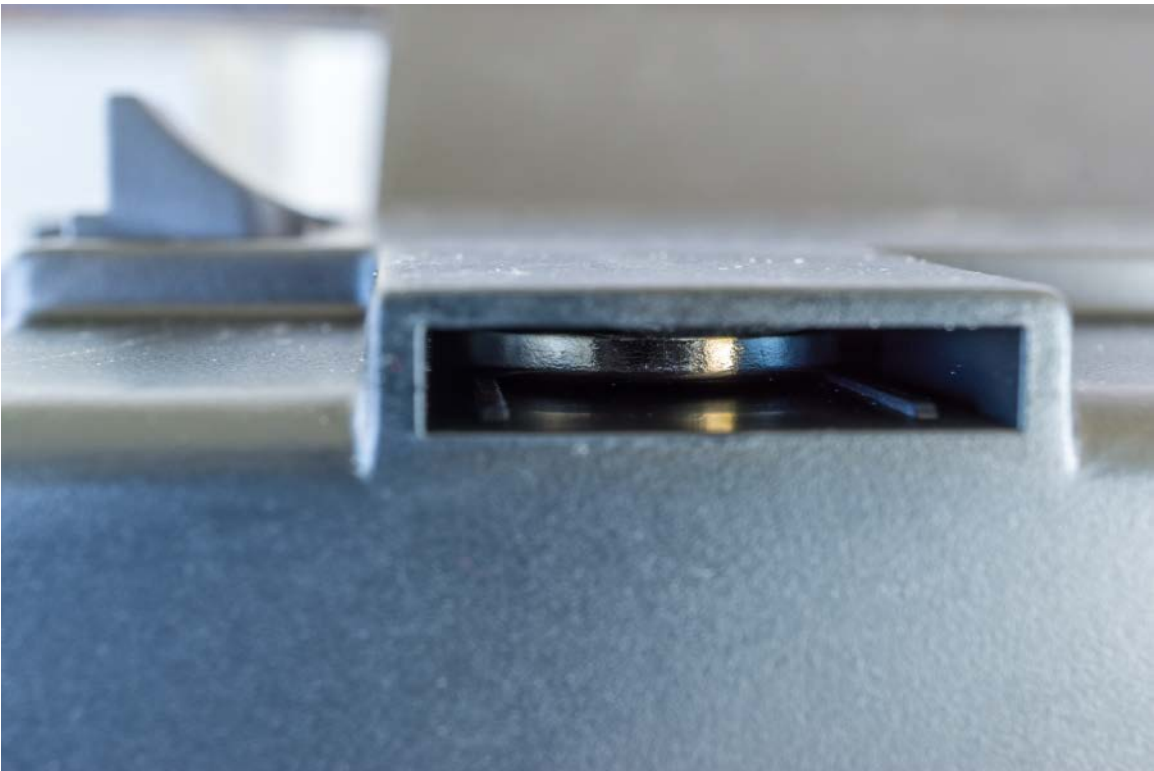
The water management system has been modified and improved. There is a catch tray that will funnel the water into the water trough when certain sharpening functions are used.



The fine adjustment wheel has numbering on it. In the past, users would file a mark on the wheel keep track of rotations and partial rotations when making fine adjustments. Now, the wheel is marked prominently with a known rotation conversion to linear movement of the arm.



Not readily apparent but one of the most welcome changes is located in this small plastic pocket.



Rather than enclosing a rare earth magnet in a mini Ziplock bag and dropping it into the water trough to attract the metal fines, Tormek has molded a pocket in the water trough to hold a rare earth magnet. With its strength and location, the metal fines are attracted to that position of the water tray.



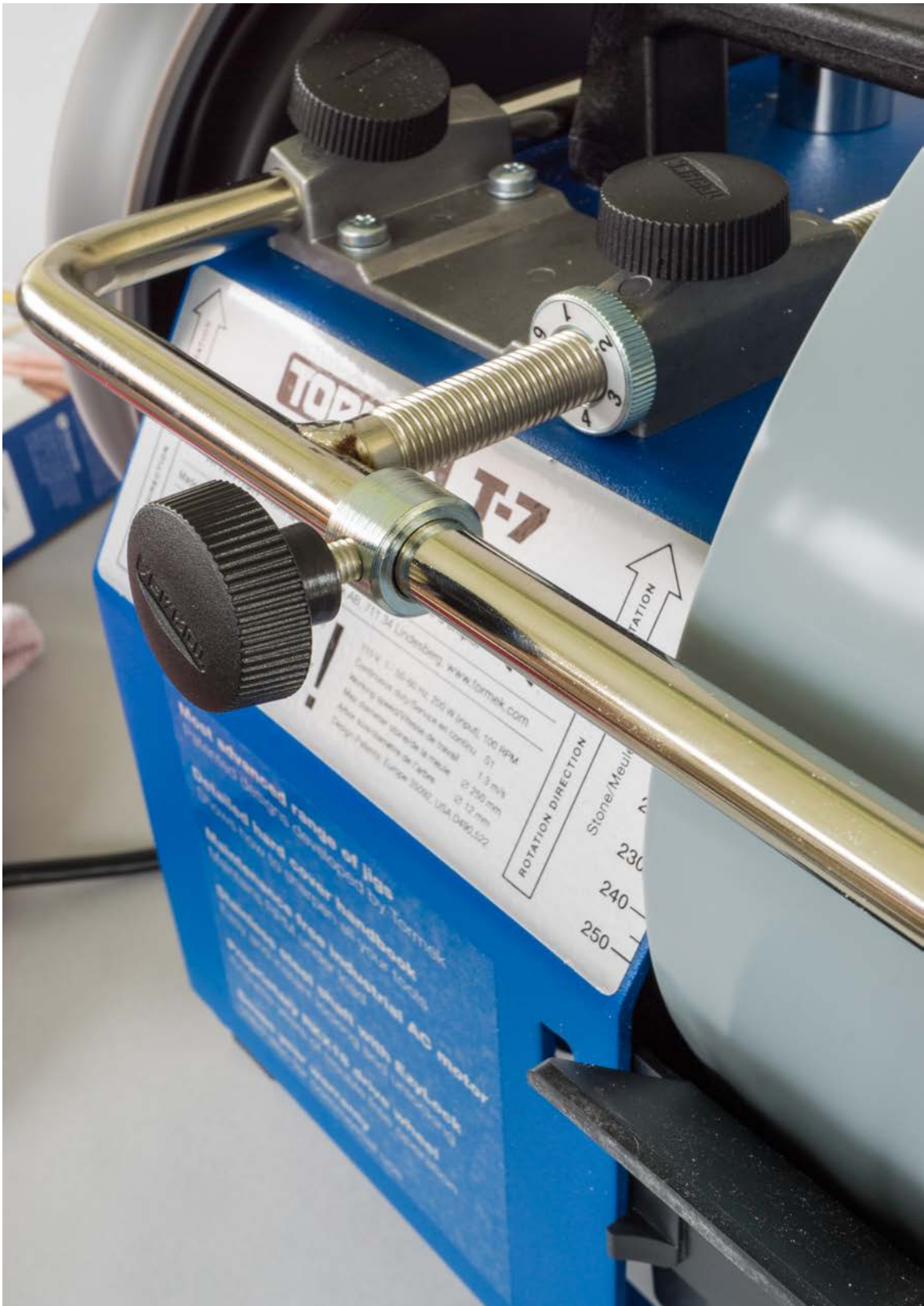
Now when the session is over and the water tray is dumped, nearly all of the metal fines are located in one spot rather than in solution in the water. By removing them from the water, as the magnet in the bag used to do, the water can be disposed of without fear of ultimately causing a serious plug in the drain pipes.



With the metal fines removed from the water and attracted to the location of the magnet, they can be easily removed with a paper towel for safe disposal after the water in the tray has been dumped.



On the underside of the provided sharpening fixture is one of the other added features. The lock ring and knob along with the other knob threaded in the jig for storage and safe keeping become part of the jig limited range system. Properly set and used, it prevents sliding off the wheel.



The collar and locking screw are slid on to the jig guide bar and will be positioned and locked in place once the tool being sharpened is positioned in the jig and adjusted. Positioned and locked in place, it will limit the travel in that direction keeping the tool on the wheel.



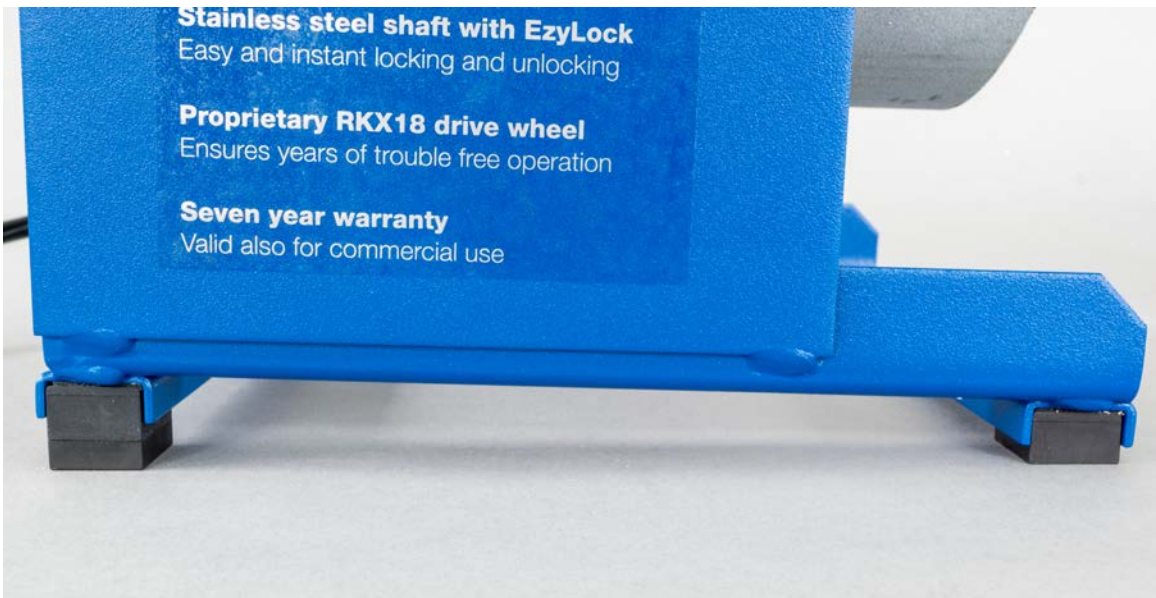
The other end of the guide bar is drilled and tapped to receive the threaded knob which will limit the jig movement in that direction.



With this end cap in place and the other limit being set, a properly adjusted tool in the jig should be held properly positioned within the acceptable limits of movement across the stone.



The included wheel balancing and dressing jig works superbly and is a welcome addition to the base kit. The prior design and the aftermarket available systems didn't work as easily or as precisely as this does.



Another incredibly thoughtful design change is the tilting function. There are extra feet that are magnetically stored in the underframe channel that can be added to the existing feet to tip the entire Tormek to one side slightly. This aids with the water management and allowing it to flow into the water trough. A minor point but extremely useful.



In use, the 10 inch wheel with its shallow hollow grind is a joy to use. Whether graded as coarse for additional stock removal or fine for a finer edge, the process is simple.

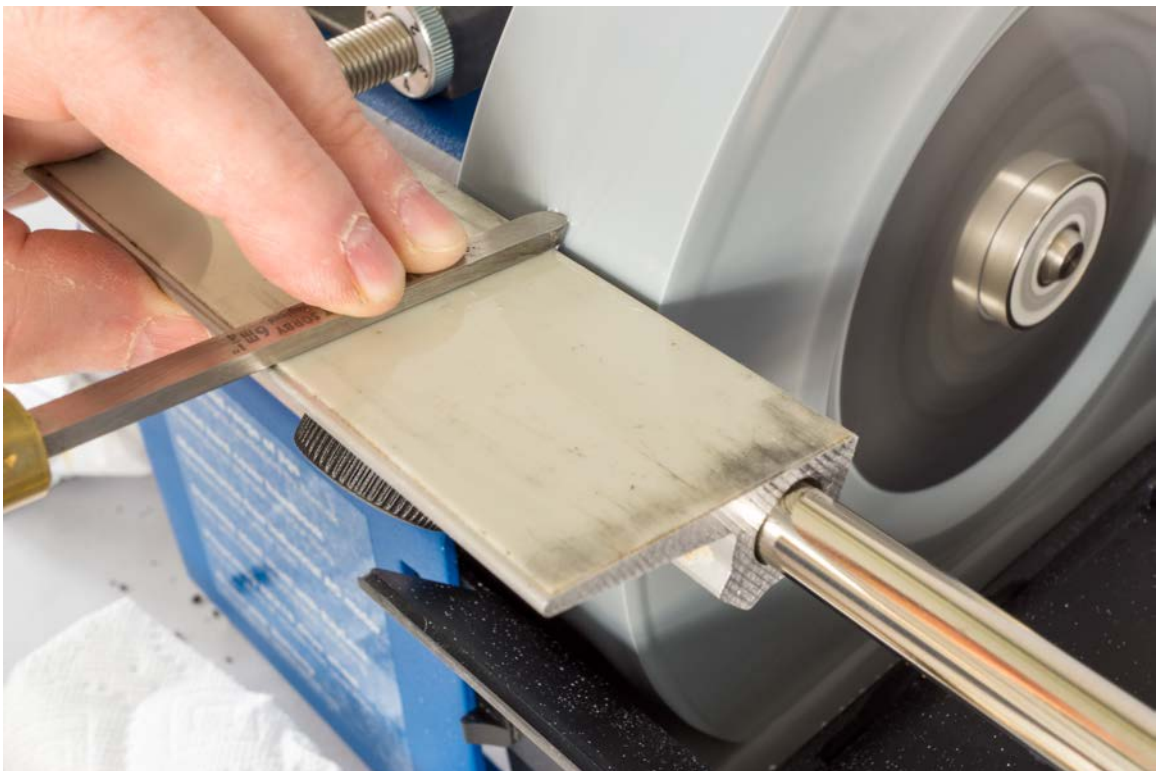
The demo DVD and the instruction manual are excellent at explaining not only how to use the Tormek but also the fundamentals of sharpening and honing. The advantages of the water cooled Tormek sharpening system are many. The water cooling keeps the edge being worked on cool and carries away the sharpening debris. The jigs, once properly adjusted, allow for accurate and repeated presentation to the wheel. By allowing the user to remove the jig from the guide bar allowing for edge examination, the user can easily determine when their desired results have been achieved. If the process needs to be continued, there is no error when repositioning the jig and tool for additional sharpening. Regardless of the tool being sharpened, all of the jigs clamp the edge in place and the jig is guided by the Tormek guide arm. This accurate repositioning allows for single facet edges. The settings are repeatable using the setup fixture so repeating the sharpening process can be done "by the numbers" if desired. This will take any guesswork out of repeated sharpening of the same tool. With the accompanying leather honing strop, the just sharpened tool can be honed even before removing it from the sharpening jig.



The attached leather strop and honing compound can be used immediately after sharpening without even removing the tool from the jig. It runs at the same slow rpm as the stone.



Whether sharpening plane irons, chisels, knives, scissors, or whatever, nearly every edge benefits from honing.



Setting up for scraper turning tools couldn't be easier. Using any of the platform accessories, the desired angle is set and every scraper can be sharpened in only moments.



A look at the finished edge after a quick pass.



Whether a skew chisel, gouge, or special grind turning tool, all can be accommodated with the assortment of jigs available. The keener edge cuts better and lasts longer.



A quick look at the skew chisel after sharpening on the Tormek T-7.

If you have owned or do own a Tormek, you'll be very pleased with the new Tormek T-7. There are several very helpful design changes that will make using it more enjoyable. The water management changes with the add on chute and tilting foot lift are nice additions. The embedded magnet to catch the metal fines eliminates the homemade workaround. Seemingly smaller and lighter yet providing all of the same functionality and backwards compatible with all of the jigs and fixtures is a plus. The new jig travel control features make use easier and safer. There is nothing not to like about the new T-7. Even the color is a refreshing change. For those who have never owned or used a Tormek, give the T-7 serious consideration. Regardless of your craft or hobby, there are jigs and fixtures to sharpen any edge you'll use in your work. Whether household utensils such as knives, cleavers, scissors, or garden implements, they can be sharpened. Nearly every edge in the shop from your plane irons through your jointer knives can be sharpened with the appropriate available jigs. Carver, turner, woodworker, gardener, or other need for edged tools, the Tormek can put a super edge on it. I can't recommend it highly enough.

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