

## PSS1 Sharpening System

by Tom O'Brien

**E**ven the best craftspeople have a gap or two in their skill set. My weakness is sharpening — I've never been able to put a razor-fine edge on my chisels or plane irons. So when the M.Power Precision Sharpening System (PSS1) showed up at my door, I decided to set aside any initial skepticism and give it a try.

**Idiot-proof design.** The system is admirably simple, with nothing to adjust and no small pieces to lose. It consists of two pieces of extruded aluminum — a base to set the tool on and a two-sided sliding carriage that holds a diamond stone. One side of the carriage is angled at 25 degrees, and the other at 30 degrees. This allows the user to hone a primary angle, then flip the carriage around to carve an extra-fine secondary bevel on the tip.

**Operation.** The standard sharpening package includes a 60-micron "Preparation" stone and a 35-micron "Finishing" stone (three other grits are also available). To hone, you place the blade beside one shoulder of the tool recess, slide it forward until it contacts the stone, and move the carriage back and forth. You do this first with the Preparation stone, then with the Finishing stone. There's a replaceable deburring plate on the bottom of the tool recess for smoothing the flat side of the blade.

Unskilled sharpeners (like me) will appreciate how easy it is to steady the blade and move the stone. But there is a learning curve: You have to verify that the blade is squarely positioned in the tool recess, maintain a light touch with both hands, and use short strokes that don't allow the carriage to overlap the edge of the base (to prevent wobbling).

**Honing & sharpening.** I tested the system's capabilities on a variety of cutting tools. Though the PSS1 proved capable of sharpening narrow chisels as well as planes, it was most effective as a honing device. It took me only a few passes to restore the razor-sharp edge to a properly tuned chisel, whereas trying to put a fine edge on a brand-new one-inch chisel was as tedious as blowing up an air mattress by mouth.

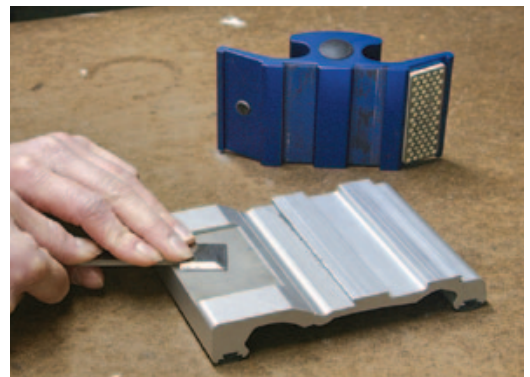
In the shop, this tool might be handy for adding a micro-bevel to a machine-ground blade (or touching it up later). But it would be most useful on the job site, if just for the peace of mind you'd gain by knowing that if you needed to mortise a lockset or shave a molding, you wouldn't have to worry about the blade.

*Contributing editor Tom O'Brien is a carpenter in New Milford, Conn.*

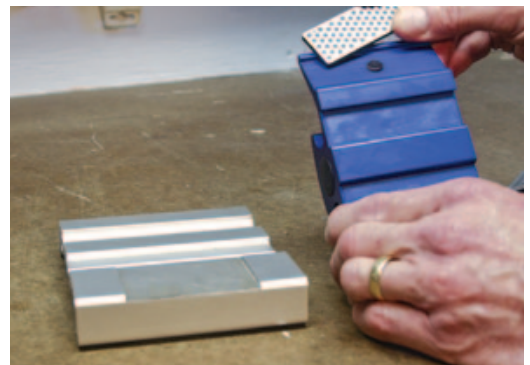
**Price:** \$80; additional stones, \$13 each  
**M.Power Tools Ltd., [m-powertools.com](http://m-powertools.com)**



To sharpen a plane blade or chisel with the PSS1, you simply place it on the base and run a diamond stone housed in the carriage back and forth over it.



The diamond stone in the carriage hones the beveled edges of the cutting tools, and a deburring plate on the base takes the edge off the flat side.



Powerful magnets anchor the interchangeable diamond stones to the wings of the carriage.