

Clean Your Teeth

Robyn Mierzwa, Makeville Studio

Regular cleaning extends the life of your saw blades and router bits and keeps them cutting at their best. With an affordable, easy-to-use "cleaning kit" on hand, this important maintenance task takes only a few minutes.

Materials:

- Simple Green concentrated household cleaner
- Soft brass bristle brush and/or scrubbing pads (non-stick/teflon-friendly type)
- Small jar and large soaking tub with lids

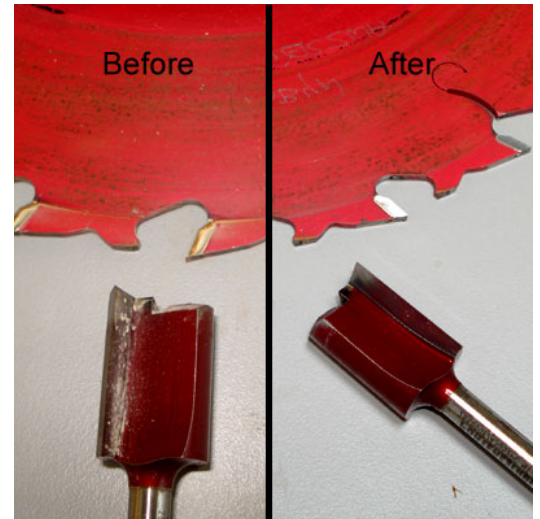
Instructions

Step 1 - Gather your materials. The containers shown were purchased as part of a cleaning kit from Rockler, but you can save a few bucks and recycle an old tupperware container and jelly jar.

For scrubbing, use nothing more abrasive than a soft brass bristle brush. If you have coated blades, you'll want to get a non-stick/teflon-friendly scrubbing pad to remove really hardened-on gunk.

I like Simple Green for two reasons. First, it is an affordable, "environment-friendly" cleaner that works well. Second, unlike many other cleaning products, it doesn't contain chemicals that can weaken the brazing on carbide-tipped blades and bits.

Step 2 - Soak the blade or bit. Make a cleaning mixture of two parts Simple Green and one part water. Use just enough mixture to fully cover the blade or bit when it is submerged in the container. Allow the blade/bit to soak for 10 minutes.



Step 3 - Scrub the gunk off. If your blade or bit doesn't come clean with light scrubbing, put it back into the cleaning solution for another 5 or 10 minutes. You can also add more Simple Green to your mixture for really stubborn, burned-on gunk. Whatever you do, don't be tempted to use a harder abrasive (such as a metal scraper or steel brush) -- these can nick and dull the cutting edges, making your blade or bit ineffective at best, dangerous at worst.



Step 4 - Rinse, dry and protect. When you're done cleaning, rinse your blade/bit in water, dry immediately and coat lightly with WD-40 to inhibit rust.

