

PERFECTION EVERY TIME

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN HOLTHAM



Alan Holtham is a fan of Record Power's planer knife setting jig

All woodworking machines need to be set up properly if you are to get the best out of them, none more so than the planer. In this case, the setting of the knives is absolutely critical and the difference between the machine working properly and not working at all is perhaps just a few thou in the knife height. If the knives are set fractionally too low the machine

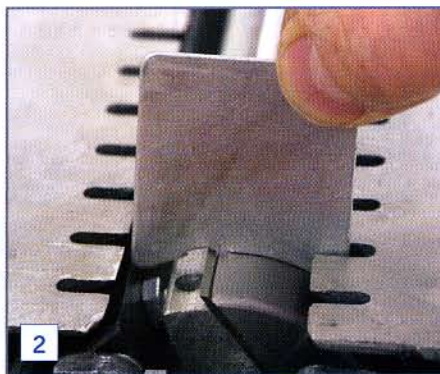
will plane tapers, and if they are set too high you are left with the characteristic snipe on board ends, **photo 1**.

Most manufacturers supply a simple gauge of some sort to help you set the knives, **photo 2**, and although these are reasonably successful they only operate on one end of the block at a time. The problem with this is that making a small adjustment at one end of the knife alters the setting at the other end, so you have to keep moving to and fro from one end to the other.

Also, no matter what you do, the knives tend to move fractionally as you tighten up the locking wedges, so consequently you need to make minute adjustments and re-tighten each time.



1
If the knives are set even a tad too high you'll get a snipe of the end of the board...



2
... and gauges only operate on one end of the cutter block at a time...



3
... and that's where this new jig comes in

RARE EARTH MAGNETS

The new planer knife setting jig supplied by Record Power is claimed to overcome all these problems, **photo 3**. Supplied in a neat wooden box it consists of two magnetic jigs with micro adjustments on the central setting rod, **photo 4**.

Each jig has four rare earth magnets in the swivelling seatings and another magnet in the end of the setting rod, **photo 5**. These magnets are incredibly strong and a single one will quite happily support the weight of a 10in knife, **photo 6**.

USING JIG

To gain the necessary access to the cutter block it is much easier to remove one of the tables, **photo 7**.

There are now two ways of using the jig depending on the information provided by the manufacturer. Some will specify the amount of projection of the blade from the cutter block in thousandths of an inch.

If you have this information you need to zero the jig first, so remove the old knives and holding wedges and locate each jig onto the cutter block, **photo 8**.

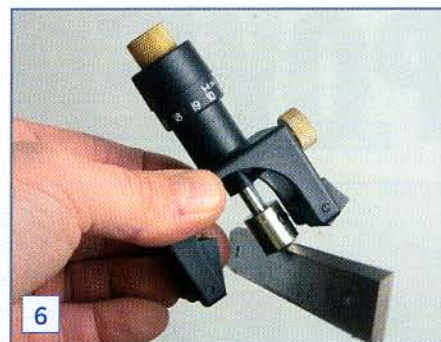
Now wind the setting rod down until it just touches the block and make a note of the reading on the scale. Then, with the jig removed from the block, wind up the setting rod by the desired amount of



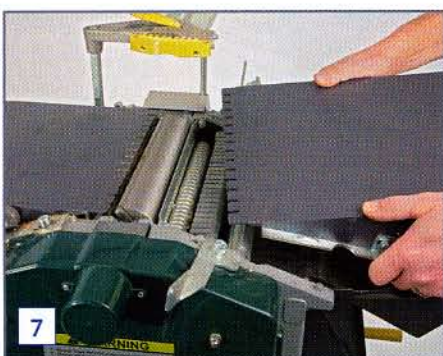
4 It comprises two magnetic jigs with micro adjustments on the central setting rod



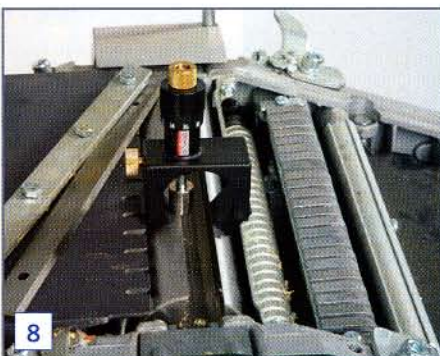
5 Each jig has four rare earth magnets in the swivelling seatings and another in the end of the setting rod



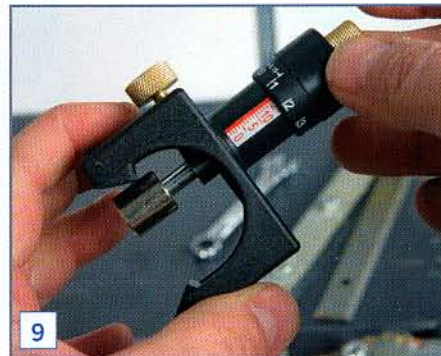
6 A single one will take the weight of a 10in knife



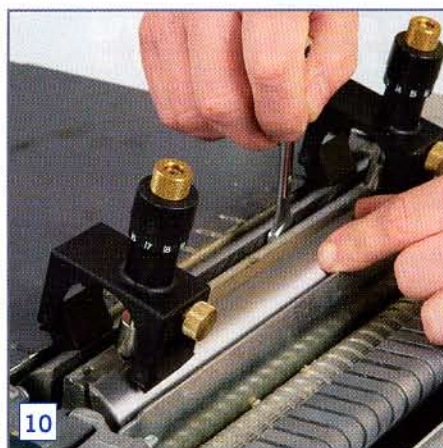
7 The cutter block is most easily accessed by removing a table



8 Locate each jig on the cutter block



9 Note the setting rod reading, then wind up the rod by the desired amount of projection



10 The magnets in the setting rod pull up the knife and tighten the wedge



11 If you don't hve the setting data, zero the jig with an existing knife in situ, and lock up the setting rod

projection, photo 9.

I found the instructions rather confusing as to how the scales work, eventually deciding that the graduations on the black scale amounted to 15 thou.

Lock this setting with the side knob and repeat the procedure for the other jig. Provided you use the jig on the same machine each time you should not need to make any alterations again.

FITTING KNIVES

All you have to do now is fit the new knives and locking wedges back into the cutter block, locate a jig at either end of the block and allow the magnets in the setting rod to pull the knife up to the required height and tighten up the wedge, photo 10. It's as simple as that!

If you do not have the setting data for the knife projection, just zero the jig

using an existing knife in situ, lock up the setting rod and once again you have a permanent reference height ready for each blade change, photo 11. ■

THE VERDICT

This very handy piece of kit will save you hours of frustration and, more importantly, drastically improve the performance of your planer. It can be used on most machines up to 16in wide and really does what it says on the box. The instructions need clarifying a little but at £39.99 it's something of a steal.

PRICE & AVAILABILITY

Price £39.99 inc VAT
Record Power
Tel: 08707701777
Website: www.recordpower.co.uk