

Tenon Saws and Coping Saws

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Hand Tools

A tenon saw is a stiff-backed hand saw for accurate straight cuts in wood, especially joints and mitres, while a coping saw cuts fine curves with a thin blade in a metal frame. Together they cover precise straight and curved hand sawing in the workshop.

Key Features

- Tenon saw blade 250-300 mm, 13-15 teeth per inch
- Rigid brass or steel back keeps the saw straight
- Coping saw frame 150 mm deep throat
- Blade tension adjusted with the handle
- Fine blades from 18 to 24 TPI for coping

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Cut tenons, dovetails and mitres accurately
- Cut small curved shapes in thin wood and ply
- Follow awkward cutouts in panels
- Trim pegs and dowels flush

Safe Operation

1. Mark the cut line and hold the work in a vice
2. Start the cut with short backward strokes at the heel
3. Keep the saw vertical and follow the line
4. For curves, turn the coping saw blade to follow the cut
5. Let the saw do the work; do not force the stroke

SAFETY NOTES

- Keep fingers clear of the cut line
- Watch the saw teeth when starting a cut
- Use a bench hook or vice to secure work
- Store saws with blade guards or in a rack
- Replace blunt or bent blades rather than forcing

Maintenance & Consumables

- Wipe blades and lightly oil the frame
- Check teeth are sharp and set properly
- Retension coping saw blades before use
- Store saws in a dry rack, teeth protected
- Replace blades when they wander or bind

Specification & Buying Notes

Good tenon saws have a rigid back and comfortable handle; coping saws need a solid frame and easy tensioning. Buy spare coping blades in 24 TPI. Avoid cheap stamped tenon saws that flex on the stroke.