

Center Punches and Scriber Needles

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Marking & Layout

A centre punch makes a small dimple that guides a drill bit and stops it wandering, while a scriber is a hardened needle for scratching precise layout lines on metal. Both are tiny, essential marking tools used before almost every drilling and machining operation.

Key Features

- Centre punch tip angle 90 degrees
- Spring-loaded automatic centre punch for one-hand use
- Scriber points of hardened high-speed steel
- Straight or angled scriber handles
- Pocket or bench sets with storage tube

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Mark hole centres before drilling metal and wood
- Start drill bits accurately without skidding
- Scratch layout lines on steel and aluminium
- Transfer dimensions from a rule to the workpiece

Safe Operation

1. Mark the position with a rule and engineer's square
2. Scribe the line, then cross the position
3. Place the punch point exactly on the cross
4. Strike once with a hammer (or press an auto punch)
5. Check the dimple is centred before drilling

SAFETY NOTES

- Keep points shielded when in pockets or drawers
- Hold work so a miss with the hammer cannot hurt fingers
- Do not write on surfaces with a scriber
- Keep punches sharp; blunt points skip
- Store in a roll, tube or tray with point protectors

Maintenance & Consumables

- Re-sharpen punch points on a fine stone
- Wipe the scriber point and oil lightly
- Check tips for chipping and mushrooming
- Store as a set so sizes are not lost
- Keep a spare automatic punch for class use

Specification & Buying Notes

Buy a set of solid punches in 2-6 mm plus one automatic centre punch and a couple of hardened scribers. Quality matters: soft punches deform and ruin layout accuracy.