

Crafty Cat tools

John Cutts opens up a pack of colourful tools to see how they perform

Crafty Cat supplies a selection of extremely useful and top quality abrasive tools. These can be useful to anyone making miniatures for their dolls' houses.



COLOUR FOR CRAFTERS



The bright colours of these tools make a welcome change from shades of grey. But they are practical as well as pretty.



These tools are pretty enough to brighten up any dolls' house club night!

PHOTO: GMC/NORMAN ROWLINSON

SANDING FILES



The Crafter's File has a plastic foam core that is sufficiently rigid to work with one hand but flexible enough to be used in awkward corners. ■ The files come ready shaped with a taper and a rounded point, but could be trimmed to any convenient shape. Both sides of the file are coated with the same abrasive grit and coloured for quick recognition for the grade required.



The Sanding Files have the same rigid foam core, which is soft enough to squeeze. Each side of a file is coated with a different abrasive grit and with its own coded colour. ■ Sanding works by scratching the surface, each grade in turn puts in finer scratches. The object has a perfect finish when the scratches are so fine that they cannot be seen.



The Sanding Files come in three widths (3/4in, 1/4in and 1/8in). Each width has three grades (coarse, medium and fine). Each grade has a different grit size surface on either side and is appropriately colour coded.

■ Grit sizes are numbered and are universally recognised, the sanding files range from 100 (coarse) to 320 (fine). Other polishing abrasives can have extremely fine grits that are numbered in 1000s.

PHOTOS: BY AUTHOR UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED



To smooth a straight edge and to keep it at 90°, it is easier to place a file on a flat surface and move the object backwards and forwards. Do not put on any downward pressure as it will sink slightly into the foam and give a rounded edge.

FLEX-I-FILE



Flex-I-File, is a unique system for smoothing and polishing curved surfaces. It consists of a slightly sprung aluminium bow frame with a prong at both ends. It comes with strong flexible abrasive tapes that have a loop at each end. These loops are hooked over the prongs.

■ There are eight colour coded tapes available with grit sizes between 100 (coarse) and 1,000 (ultra fine).

SANDING BLOCKS



Super Sanding and Finishing Foam Block, is a long title for a very useful basic sanding system. ■ Each block has a different grit on each side, bonded to a soft foam core. If a piece of wood requires sanding and all eight grits are used in turn then a perfect finish will be obtained. It is important only to work along the grain of the wood. The sanding blocks are also suitable for plastics and metals, even though these have no grain, try to work only in one direction to gain the best finish.

PLASTIC SANDING NEEDLES



The fine sanding files are excellent at smoothing intricate shapes, here being used on a doll's head. ■ The resin heads of scale figures, which have been cast in two part moulds, often have a tiny ridge where the halves meet (often called a flash). This needs smoothing away without scratching the surface, a job for Crafty Cat sanding files!



Plastic Sanding Needles, a 3/16in diameter rigid plastic file with a sharp point at one end and an oblique cut at the other end with various grits bonded to the surface, again conveniently colour coded. Ideal for smoothing all those intricate corners and confined spaces.



The Flex-I-File is squeezed gently to give the tape some slack so that it follows the contour of the items to be smoothed. Try to use the full length of the tape to even out the wear.

■ The Flex-I-File is ideal for smoothing internal slots or openings as the tape can be un-hooked and threaded through the slot and then re-hooked on the frame before use.

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WET & DRY



All Crafty Cat products can be used wet, that is with a little water added to the surface. ■ Can be a little messy! Can only be used on surfaces not harmed by water, so do not use on bare wood.

■ The advantages of using the wet system:
 ■ The abraded particles wash away.
 ■ The sanding block does not get clogged up and therefore lasts longer.
 ■ Less dust in the air.
 ■ The water acts as a lubricant to make the sanding easier.

CONTACT DETAILS

Crafty Cat products are available through Albion Alloys. Please telephone 01202 511232 or email: sales@albionalloys.co.uk for your nearest dealer.