

The color of the mixture in its liquid state is a dark gray if you are using black poster powder. Other mixtures will vary. A test drying is suggested before actual application.

Use generous amounts of the glue mixture to fix the planks—just how much will come with experience. Force each plank snugly against the adjoining plank, squeezing glue up between them along the edges and at the butt ends. If you work carefully, there should be no overflow of glue onto the surface of the plank.

Do not attempt to remove the excess glue while it is still wet. A damp rag can wipe away an accidental spill, but you must work fast before the color stains the material. In most cases, leave the mess alone.

After the glue is completely dried, scrape away the beaded excess. Do not sand the deck to remove the beaded glue. Scrape it. Remove all traces of surface glue. Scraping is sometimes, in my opinion, better than sanding. The deck is smoothed and the lines are crisp. You might like the results (FIG. 11-6).

Marker. You can use a felt-tipped marker to indicate seams. To avoid penetration to the deck side,

the plank must be painted on the exposed side. You can use varnish, shellac, or Deft. Glue the unpainted side to the deck after marking. This is a tricky method; be careful how you do it. Experiment first.

Wood Filler. You can indicate seams by forcing dark mahogany wood filler into the seam lines of laid decking. To make your own wood filler, mix sawdust from the wood of your choice with a cellulose-based glue.

Leave a space the width of the caulking seam when you are gluing the planks to the deck area. Place a metal removable shim to ensure the correct width. Remove the shim after you apply each row of planking. Thin the mixture with solvent if needed. Force it into the seams with a spatula. Clean the excess away by scraping or using solvent. After the area is dry, you can sand it smooth. This method works well for smaller models.

Methods of Scraping

I prefer the following method to smooth wood surfaces and shapes. Scraping was used long before sandpaper came along and, according to one of my

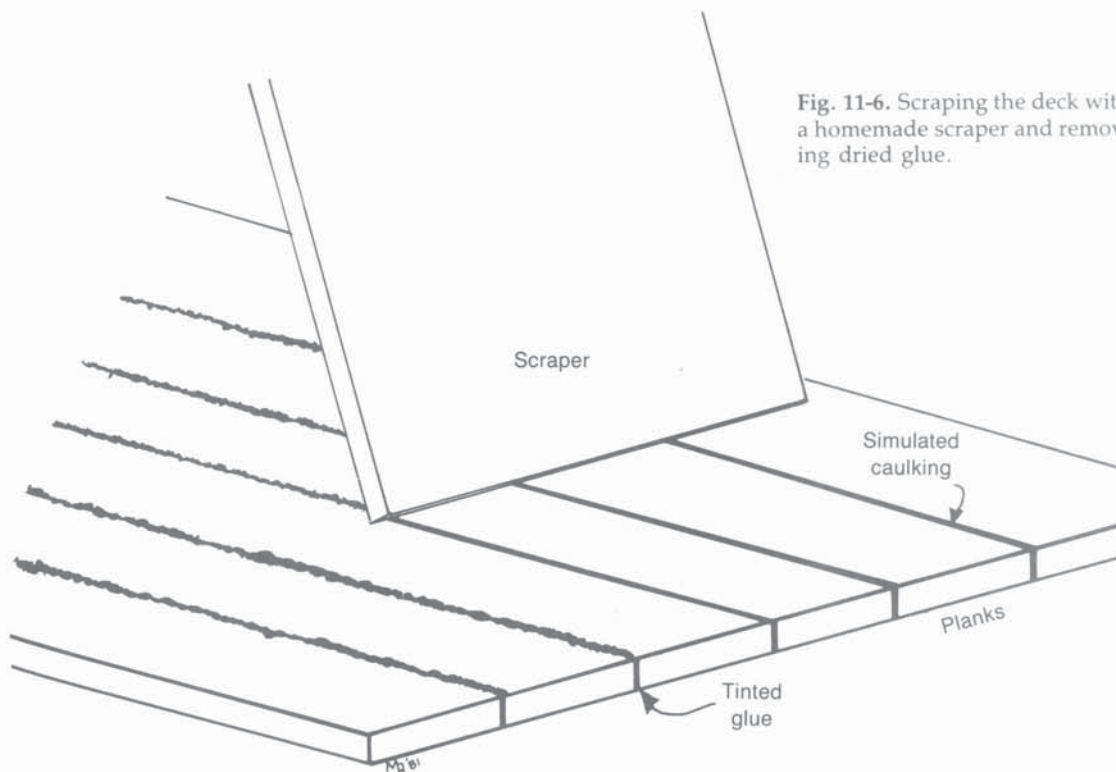


Fig. 11-6. Scraping the deck with a homemade scraper and removing dried glue.

sources, is still a preferred method by cabinetmakers and fine woodworkers.

FIGURE 11-6 shows a scraper in action. This tool is easy to make and can be purchased from wood tool catalogs. To make your own, select a piece of sheet metal or thin plate steel, under 1/16 inch thick. File or grind the edge at 90 degrees to the broad surface. A rolled edge should form, especially with grinding. Remove the edge, but do not sharpen. The "tooth" is what does the work. Tilt the blade in the direction of travel. Exercise caution to keep the cutting surface flat to the work. A nasty gouge can result from tilting.

Making your own scrapers allows you to design the widths and shapes you will need for each particular job. Wide blades, curved shapes, convex and concaved cutting edges—the possibilities are limitless.

One modeler uses 1/4-inch plate glass and pieces under this thickness to make his scrapers. He collects scrap pieces from his local glass and window installer. Other sources are hardware or building materials dealers. You can use thinner pieces for small jobs. The glass is held in a flat wood handle secured by epoxy. There is no need to sharpen this type of scraper, and the cost is so low that if you drop or chip one, you can simply throw it away.

Do you have a supply of dulled removable blades? You can use them as scrapers. Exercise caution. The discarded blades might be too dull to cut properly, but you must use them with care because the cutting edge is extremely thin. You can put a scraper edge on the blade as outlined previously.

The overall use and action of scraping, as indicated in FIG. 11-7, is common sense. Scrape away from the fixed objects, such as a deck hatch combing or cabin. This method prevents buildup against the structure and a difficult clean up afterward.

The bottom panel in FIG. 11-7, marked A through D, will show you how to hold the thin blade of a scraper mounted in a handle. As discussed previously, you can guide flat scrapers using a finger or two to maintain steady downward pressure.

Tilting the cutting edge in the direction of travel results in jumping (FIG. 11-7A). This can, and will, gouge the surface, sometimes beyond repair. The blade held in a vertical manner (FIG. 11-7B) cuts too deeply. FIGURE 11-7C and D indicate the proper angle for scraping either to the left or right. The dashed line indicates the vertical plane. Imagine the angle needed as always being in the line of travel.

DECKING MATERIAL

The method to use to indicate seams depends a great deal on the material used for the decking. The harder, close-grained woods, such as holly, will be easier to work with. Teak is too open grained, and in scale the grain is entirely too large.

Beech and birch are woods to consider for planking. They are somewhat hard and take a nice finish if prepared by scraping and successive sandings using finer grits. Basswood, the most commonly used, is the median wood. Relatively hard and inexpensive, it takes a nice finish. These woods stain well and can be used to simulate other woods, such as teak.

For treenails, if you wish to actually use them in your model for decking or planking the hull, I recommend bamboo. It draws well down to the fineness of a human hair. Place the bamboo in a predrilled hole, after dipping it in glue. Nip off the excess flush with the deck using a fingernail or cuticle clipper. I use sharp wire dykes for the larger and a small wire cutting tweezer for the finer plugs. Sand or scrape the exposed end, along with the decking. The final finish, varnish or shellac, penetrates deeper into the exposed end, giving it a darker, contrasting color than the deck.

Another method to simulate treenails is to drill or punch proper scale-sized holes at the butt ends of the planks. Force a contrasting color, such as wood filler into the hole. Sand or scrape when dry.

DECK FURNITURE

Now that you have established a deck for your ship, consider what will be placed on the deck.

Deck furniture consists of those parts of a ship model that are not part of the deck (FIG. 11-8). You will need strong fife rails placed at designated areas according to your model's plan. Cabins, skylights, hatches, companionways, and grates might fall into this grouping. Binnacle and steering apparatus can loosely be classed as deck furniture. If it penetrates through or rises above the deck, or is a structure that is not the deck or parts of the hull, you can call it furniture.

The complicated descriptions of which type of deck furniture belongs on your ship is a matter for research. Each vessel was built with its own specially designed deck furniture. Often in the life of a ship, some deck furniture was changed, other furniture

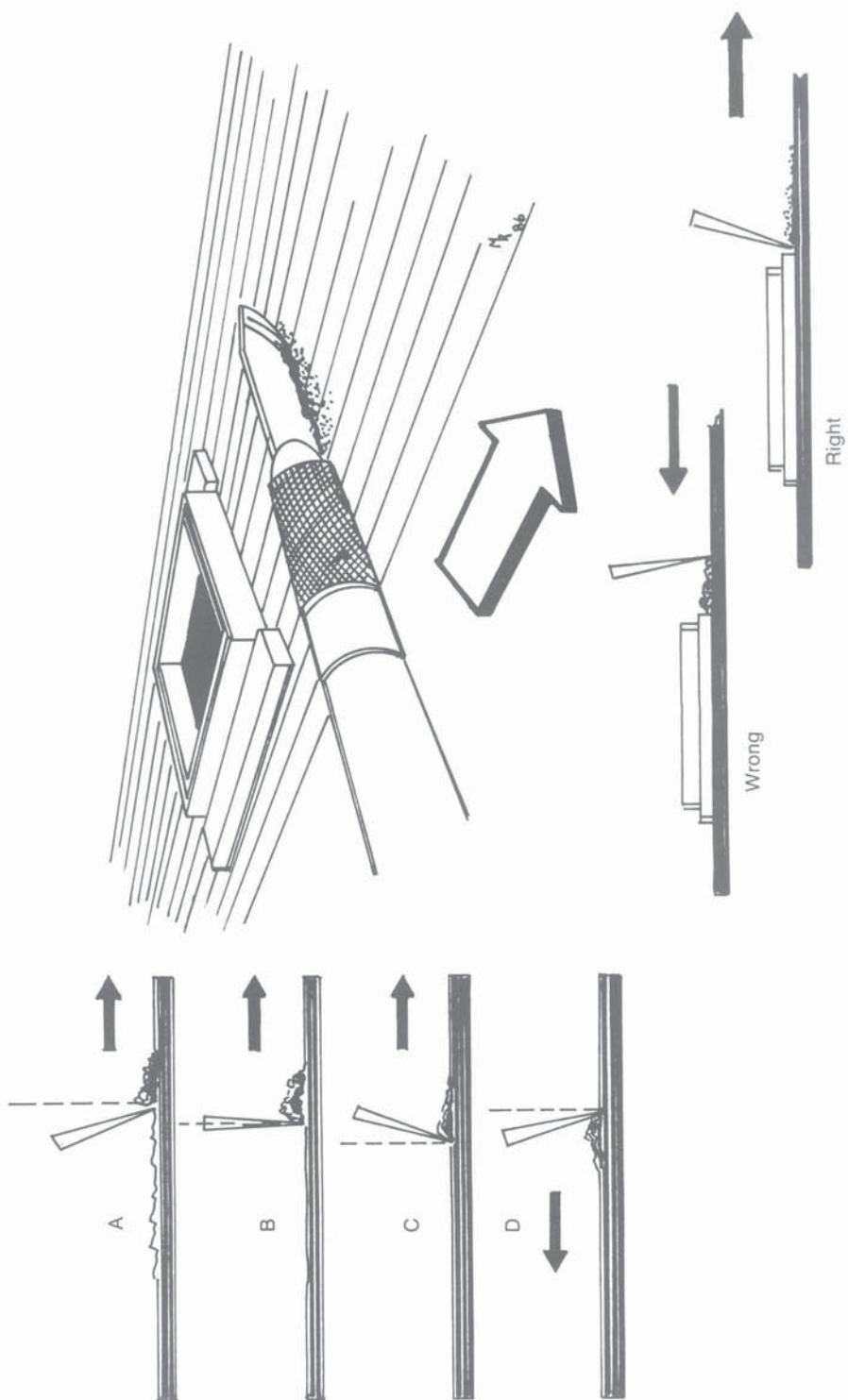


Fig. 11-7. The right and wrong way to scrape a wood surface (deck).