

Tool Time with Chuck

## An In-Depth Review Of "Sharp, Pointy Things"

I've been busy congratulating myself, as this is the one year anniversary of my Tool Time with Chuck articles. While this may seem inconsequential, it really is quite an accomplishment. It's another year of tool misuse and abuse without losing an eye or digit. Of course, it's all in the name of good editorial copy and science that I bring you these tool reviews. I know that if it weren't for these articles, you would be stuck flipping channels on cable looking for reruns of This Old House or "Tool Time with Tim Taylor".

One year ago I gave critical praise to an array of hammers, also known as "Big Pounding Things". This anniversary article is all about the companion tool of the hammer, the "Sharp Pointy Thing". After all, what good is a hammer if you don't have something to whack with it.

You may recall that last time I mentioned my Dad was critical of certain tool techniques I developed growing up. For instance, to him, a screwdriver is just for turning screws. That seems rather short sighted to me. When you look at the rugged beauty of a screwdriver – pointy on one end, big and fat on the other – it begs to be whacked with a hammer. Dad always said "That's what a chisel is for, Chuck.". Phooey, I've got a tool box full of screwdrivers and not a single chisel. As far as I'm concerned, chisels are lousy for tightening screws, so there's no reason in even buying one. Having an array of screwdrivers is really just killing two birds with one big pounding thing. It's just good common sense and economics.

In the interest of science and editorial content, I have conducted some experiments to catalog and validate my use of sharp pointy things. Believe it or not, in this process I did learn a few things. For instance, when scraping unwanted gunk from the under tray of a car, it's not the sharp pointy thing that's going to put your eye out. It's the falling debris that will adhere itself to your eyeballs. (Warning: your fashionable eyeglasses with the small lenses are utterly useless as safety glasses). Suffice to say, sharp pointy things excel at scraping. If the item being scraped is particularly tough, don't be afraid to break out the hammer to help coerce things along. I've never met a scraper that didn't work better when used with a five pound "persuader".

Sharp pointy things can also be used to pry things open or off. This technique may have been honed on bottled beverages, but it works equally well on automotive items like cam seals, sticky gaskets and CD players. I

can't imagine trying to un-jam a CD player without a sharp pointy thing to cram into the little CD slot.

There are plenty of home uses for sharp pointy things too: picking locks, opening walnuts, resetting clocks, the list goes on and on. In fact, you could consider that in any situation where a big pounding thing is too big or pounding, you could easily substitute a sharp pointy thing and get the job done right.



You may be curious as to which size sharp pointy thing is best for each type of job. In my experience, when it comes to scraping, prying, opening or dislodging, bigger is always better. This is especially true when used in conjunction with a hammer. A bigger tool will give you a larger hand-hold area, which is important for keeping your fingers out of harms way. When in doubt, use the biggest pointy thing you can find.

In summary, you can't go wrong with any manner of sharp pointy thing. I've found no downside to their use for scraping, pounding, severing, peeling, prying, opening and dislodging. They are especially effective when used with hammers and mallets, as covered in last years article. On Chuck's Tool Approval Scale, I give them a perfect "10"!

One final note. If Dad ever comes in to ask you why his screw drivers are beat, bent and disfigured, just say, "I dunno, Dad. I only ever borrow your chisels!".

Thank goodness Craftsman still has a lifetime warranty.

## Miata Modification, continued

I wanted. We decided to go with the Dodge V-10 that is used in the Viper and add a supercharger. Now we're talking about a Miata with over eight hundred horsepower at full boost. It's taken a little while to get used to this kind of power, but it is just the ticket when some smart-aleck in a pony car tries to pull away from me at a stop light. I'm sure I have put more than one of those people in serious therapy as my taillights disappear into the night.

*Bodywork:* After we had all the suspension and engine modifications done, we had to do some minor adjustments to the ride height and bodywork to make the car manageable on the street. All in all, although the project was pretty expensive and took a lot of time, the results have been more than worth it.

In closing, I just want to thank all the people at AIM for all their hard work on my car. I can't wait for all the people in the club to see it.

(See Page 7 for a sneak peek of Sara J's car!)