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> [STANLEY No.4 Adjustable Hand Planer \(Model 12-404\) Instruction Manual](#)

STANLEY 12-404

STANLEY No.4 Adjustable Hand Planer (Model 12-404) Instruction Manual

Your guide to safe and effective use of your STANLEY Hand Planer.

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing the STANLEY No.4 Adjustable Hand Planer. This tool is designed for precision woodworking, allowing you to achieve smooth, flat surfaces and accurate dimensions on various wood types. This manual provides essential information for the safe and effective use, maintenance, and troubleshooting of your hand planer. Please read it thoroughly before initial use and retain it for future reference.



Figure 1: STANLEY No.4 Adjustable Hand Planer (Model 12-404)

SAFETY INFORMATION

Always follow basic safety precautions to reduce the risk of personal injury when using this tool.

- **Wear Eye Protection:** Always wear safety goggles or safety glasses with side shields that comply with current national standards.
- **Wear Hand Protection:** Use appropriate gloves to protect hands from sharp edges, especially when handling the blade.
- **Keep Work Area Clean:** Cluttered areas invite accidents. Ensure your workspace is well-lit and free from obstructions.
- **Secure Workpiece:** Always clamp or otherwise secure the workpiece to prevent movement during planing.
- **Inspect Tool Before Use:** Check for damaged parts, loose components, or any other condition that may affect safe operation. Do not use if damaged.
- **Keep Blades Sharp:** Dull blades require more force and can cause the planer to slip, increasing the risk of injury.
- **Proper Stance:** Maintain a balanced stance and firm grip on the planer.
- **Store Safely:** When not in use, store the planer in a dry, secure place out of reach of children.

COMPONENTS OVERVIEW

Familiarize yourself with the parts of your STANLEY No.4 Hand Planer:

- **Cast-Iron Base (Sole):** The flat bottom surface that glides over the workpiece. Precision-ground for accuracy.
- **Blade (Cutter):** The hardened, tempered steel edge that shaves wood.
- **Frog:** The angled casting that supports the blade and chip breaker.
- **Chip Breaker:** A metal plate that attaches to the blade, designed to curl and break wood shavings, preventing tear-out.
- **Lever Cap:** Holds the blade and chip breaker assembly firmly against the frog. Features a quick-release cam-lock.
- **Depth Adjustment Knob:** Controls how far the blade extends below the sole, determining the cutting depth.
- **Lateral Adjustment Lever:** Allows for fine-tuning the blade's alignment, ensuring it is parallel to the sole.
- **Front Knob:** Provides a grip for the front hand, aiding in control and downward pressure.
- **Rear Handle (Tote):** Provides a grip for the rear hand, used for pushing the planer. Made of high-impact polymer.

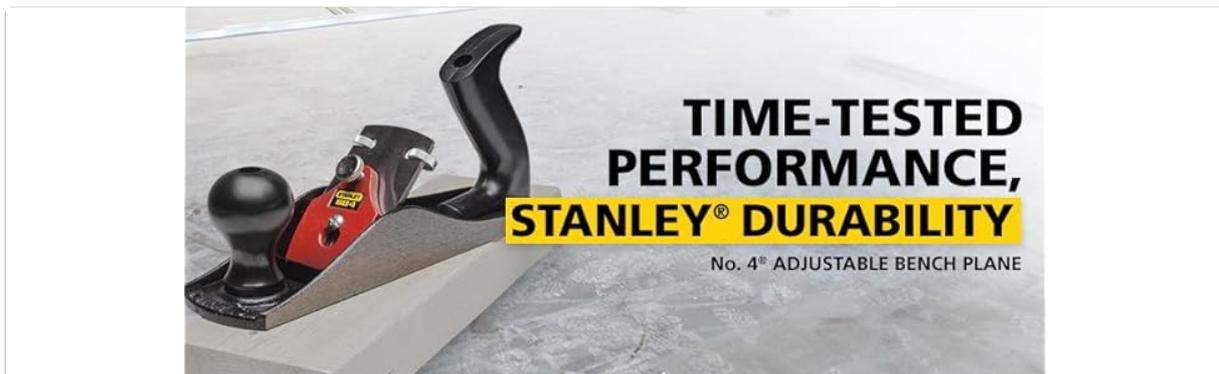


Figure 2: Key Components of the Hand Planer

SETUP

1. Unpacking and Initial Inspection

- Carefully remove the planer from its packaging.
- Inspect all components for any signs of damage during shipping. Contact STANLEY customer support if any damage is found.
- Remove any protective coatings or packaging materials.

2. Blade Preparation and Installation

The blade (cutter) may require sharpening and honing before first use for optimal performance. A factory edge is present but may benefit from further refinement.

1. **Sharpening:** Sharpen the blade to a 35-degree bevel. Use sharpening stones or a sharpening jig to achieve a razor-sharp edge.
2. **Honing:** Hone the blade to remove any burrs and achieve a polished edge.
3. **Attach Chip Breaker:** Place the chip breaker onto the blade, ensuring its edge is set back approximately 1/32 to 1/16 inch (0.8 to 1.6 mm) from the cutting edge for general work. For very fine

shavings, set it closer.

4. **Install Blade Assembly:** Loosen the lever cap. Insert the blade and chip breaker assembly into the frog, ensuring the blade's cutting edge faces down.
5. **Secure Lever Cap:** Tighten the lever cap using the cam-lock mechanism to firmly hold the blade assembly in place.



Figure 3: Blade and Chip Breaker Assembly

3. Sole Flattening (Optional, for advanced users)

While the cast-iron base is precision-ground, some users may choose to further flatten and polish the sole for ultimate accuracy. This involves rubbing the sole on a flat surface with progressively finer grits of abrasive paper (e.g., 60-grit to 120-grit, then finer) until a perfectly flat and smooth surface is achieved.

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjusting Cutting Depth

- Turn the **Depth Adjustment Knob** (located at the rear of the frog) clockwise to extend the blade for a deeper cut, or counter-clockwise to retract it for a shallower cut.
- Aim for very thin shavings, especially when starting. A common mistake is to take too deep a cut, which can lead to tear-out or make the planer difficult to push.

2. Adjusting Lateral Alignment

- Use the **Lateral Adjustment Lever** (a small lever near the blade) to ensure the blade's cutting edge is parallel to the sole.
- Sight down the sole from the front to check for even blade projection. Adjust until the blade protrudes uniformly across its width.

3. Planing Technique

1. **Secure Workpiece:** Ensure your wood is firmly clamped to a workbench.
2. **Grip:** Hold the front knob with one hand and the rear handle (tote) with the other.
3. **Starting the Cut:** Place the front of the planer on the workpiece. Apply downward pressure on the front knob as you begin to push the planer forward.
4. **Mid-Stroke:** As the planer moves across the wood, shift your downward pressure from the front knob to the rear handle to maintain even contact with the surface.
5. **Finishing the Cut:** Continue pushing until the planer clears the workpiece, maintaining downward pressure on the rear handle.
6. **Grain Direction:** Always plane with the grain of the wood to prevent tear-out. If tear-out occurs, try planing from the opposite direction or taking a shallower cut.

7. **Overlap:** Overlap each pass slightly to ensure an even surface.



Figure 4: Proper Planing Technique

MAINTENANCE

1. Cleaning

- After each use, brush off all wood shavings and dust from the planer body, especially around the blade and adjustment mechanisms.
- Use a dry cloth to wipe down the cast-iron surfaces.

2. Blade Sharpening and Honing

- A sharp blade is crucial for effective and safe planing. Sharpen the blade regularly as it becomes dull.
- Follow the same sharpening and honing procedure as described in the "Setup" section.

3. Lubrication

- Apply a thin coat of paste wax or a rust preventative oil to the sole and other exposed metal parts (excluding the blade's cutting edge) to prevent rust and reduce friction during planing.
- Apply a small amount of light machine oil to the depth adjustment screw threads periodically to ensure smooth operation.

4. Storage

- Store the planer in a dry environment to prevent rust.
- Consider using a blade guard or retracting the blade fully to protect the cutting edge and prevent accidental injury.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
Planer chatters or leaves an uneven surface.	Dull blade; blade not securely clamped; excessive depth of cut; sole not flat.	Sharpen/hone blade; ensure lever cap is tight; reduce cutting depth; consider flattening the sole.
Difficulty pushing the planer.	Dull blade; excessive depth of cut; sole friction; planing against the grain.	Sharpen/hone blade; reduce cutting depth; apply paste wax to sole; plane with the grain.

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
Tear-out or splintering of wood.	Planing against the grain; chip breaker set too far back; dull blade; excessive depth of cut.	Plane with the grain; adjust chip breaker closer to the blade edge; sharpen blade; reduce cutting depth.
Blade not cutting evenly across its width.	Blade not aligned parallel to the sole.	Adjust the lateral adjustment lever until the blade is parallel.

SPECIFICATIONS

Feature	Detail
Model Number	12-404
Brand	STANLEY
Material	Cast Iron, epoxy coating (body); Hardened, tempered steel (cutter)
Cutter Width	2 Inches
Item Weight	2.75 Pounds
Power Source	Manual
Adjustments	Depth and Lateral
Handles/Knobs	High-impact polymer, contoured and polished

WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

For information regarding warranty coverage, product support, or to purchase replacement parts, please visit the official STANLEY website or contact their customer service department. Retain your proof of purchase for warranty claims.

Note: Specific warranty terms may vary by region and product. Always refer to the official STANLEY documentation provided at the time of purchase for the most accurate and up-to-date warranty information.