

Disc Reconditioning and Maintenance

by Dusty Sacks, St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club

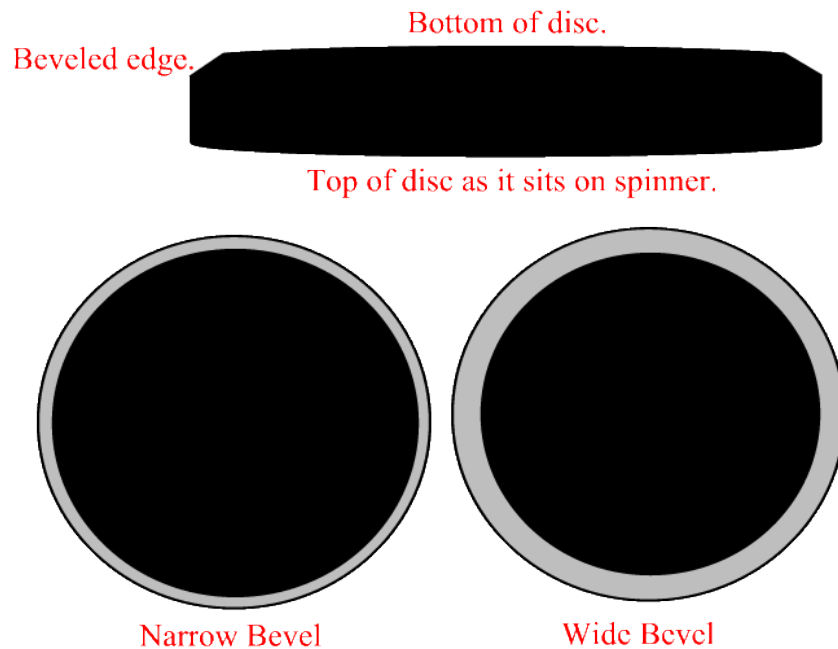
Page 1 of 3

Reconditioning Shuffleboard Discs

New shuffleboard discs are 6 inches (ca. 15 cm) wide and 1 inch (2.54 cm) high with a weight of 15 ounces (0.57 kilogram). The goal is to stay as close to these measurements as possible for the life of the disc. When purchasing a used set of discs, lay the discs out on a flat surface and compare the height of each disc to the others in the set to check for uniformity.

New sets require “seasoning” (same as reconditioning), a process of sanding the bottoms using progressively finer grit sandpapers to achieve uniform flat surfaces. Use a flat edge tool to confirm they are flat: set the flat edge against the disc bottom surface and hold up to the light to see where it shines through between the flat edge and disc.

The outer edge of the disc bottom should have a slight bevel to ride over the court beads. (New sets usually have a slightly rounded bevel.) The width of the bevel is according to personal preference. I prefer mine to be very small both in width and depth, 1/8-inch max from the edge of the disc.



Jim Albrecht, an expert in the field, prefers a wider bevel, especially for tournament discs: “The size of the bevel should be large enough that the disc rides up and over the beads and slides without snow plowing the beads off the court.” If the bevel is not large enough to achieve this slide, adjust the width of the outer edge until the bevel is great enough (up to 1.5 inches from the edge of the disc).

(See Article: “*Disc Care and Maintenance*, by Jim Albrecht, Lakeside Shuffleboard Club”.)

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Page 2 of 3

Tools

- Rotary Sander
- Table: Large enough to space a set of 8 discs set flat, bottoms up.
- Table Mat: To insure the discs stay stationary. Non-slip shelf/drawer liner works well.



- Flat Edge (ruler, metal strip, etc.)
- Sandpaper Discs: Grits 80, 120, 220, 320, 600 or 800, 1000.
- Microfiber Cloths: Two colors. Often found in store under Detailing Cloth in auto section.

Reconditioning Process

1. Assess each disc with the Flat Edge tool: are they standard height and are they level? Sand the center bottom of the disc with 80 Grit if there is any issue with the disc not being level. (This is applicable mainly to new disc sets which often come with a convex center, especially the yellow color.)
2. Lay the set of discs flat, bottoms up, on the table with mat, spaced an inch or two apart.
3. Address the bevel first. If there is no bevel, start with 80 Grit to create the bevel. Hold the sander at a slight angle to the edge and rotate around it 2-4 times with light pressure. You should be able to see the difference in light reflection between the bevel and the flat bottom surface. Follow with higher grits to smooth the bevel: 320 Grit, then 600 or 800 Grit. When reconditioning used discs, use 120 Grit for the bevel.
4. Sand the flat bottom surfaces starting with 120 Grit, approximately 5 to 10 seconds. Put enough pressure on the sander so that it doesn't jerk in the hand and presses flat against the disc bottom. Do all discs in the set. Feel the disc bottoms for smoothness and uniformity. Repeat with 220 Grit; again with 320 Grit; and again with 1000 Grit. The 220 and 320 Grits can be used to smooth the bevels at the same time, if needed. Each sheet of sandpaper should last for one or two disc sets, then discard (but intact areas of a sheet can be used for the Cleaning and Waxing process below).
5. Dust the disc bottoms with a microfiber cloth and then sand again with 1000 Grit.
6. Dust, wax and buff per Cleaning and Waxing Process steps 4 thru 6 below.

Notes: 5 to 10 seconds for sanding is suggested, but some discs may require more. Be careful though, you don't want to remove weight from the disc. The goal is to stay within the 14 oz to 15 oz range. I never sand a disc so much that the scratches disappear. Some of those scratches run deep and removing them would remove too much material. I don't want the disc to lose noticeable weight. I just want to have a fun experience on the courts without having to put a lot of power behind the disc for a good smooth slide. The deeper scratches fill in with wax and do not interfere with disc speed or motion. Large edge chips can be filled with JB Weld and sanded smooth with the disc surface.

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Page 3 of 3

Maintaining Your Discs

Even if you play only one match, discs should be waxed after every use. Discs are skidding down 52 feet of concrete, picking up dirt, debris and acquiring nicks as they hit other discs. If you don't wax every time, you are compounding the issues.

Tools Needed:

- Spinner
- Green/Blue Scrub Pad (Scotch Brite)
- Sandpaper: Grits 320, 1000.
- Microfiber Cloths: 2 colors, one for dusting, one for buffing.
- Stick Wax (or a car wax such as Collinite 476s Super Doublecoat)

Cleaning & Waxing Process

1. Load a disc, bottom up, on the spinner. All steps below are done with the disc spinning.
2. Run the scrub pad lightly across the disc to clean off the bottom surface.
3. Use 320 Grit sandpaper to quickly sand the edge of the disc. This will help soften those new nicks you received.
4. Use 1000 Grit sandpaper on the bottom surface of the disc, from the center out to the edge in a quick light swipe. You don't want to remove any wax that was left on the disc. If you carefully touch the flat surface of the disc after using the scrub pad and then again after using the 1000 grit sandpaper, you will definitely notice the difference.

NEVER, NEVER, EVER touch the edge of the disc while it is spinning.

5. Dust the disc with a soft microfiber cloth. You don't want to mix left over dirt and dust with the wax.
6. Run the stick wax, pressing down on the disc firmly, from the center to the edge twice (four times after reconditioning). Each pass should take about 3 seconds. Make sure to include the center of the disc – the spinning force tends to make the stick wax jump away from it. (A pass of the stick wax from one edge of the disc straight through the center to the other edge, about 5 seconds for the pass, is the same as two runs from center to edge.)
7. Buff the disc with a different clean microfiber cloth. Quickly run the cloth across the surface 4 or 5 times without pressing down.
8. Repeat for each disc. A properly waxed and buffed disc should show concentric flattened circles of wax covering most of the surface when viewed at an angle to the light.