

How to Shorten a Reed

By Susan J. Bowman

You may need to shorten a reed and I found out that it's actually fairly easy to accomplish. I emailed the Gowdey Reed Company and got a quick reply back from Jim Wilson that he would tell me how if I called him.

The Gowdey Reed Company was established in Providence, Rhode Island in 1834 by James Allen Gowdey. James Wilson, a master reed maker, acquired the company in 1900. This article was written after talking with his great grandson, Jim Wilson who is also a master reed maker as well as President and General Manager. The Gowdey Reed Company is now located in Central Falls, Rhode Island and manufactures reeds for both industry and handweavers. Visit their website at: <http://www.gowdeyreed.com/index.html>

I'd like to extend my thanks to Jim Wilson, for sharing this information and for reviewing the accuracy of my article. Jim began our discussion by explaining the difference between older and newer type reeds, and then he moved on to a detailed explanation of how to shorten both types.

In the older type reeds, dents are separated and held between two pieces of grooved wood by yarn that is soaked in pitch. The long wooden sides of the reed are reinforced with skinny metal strips and covered with tape. At each end there is a metal bar that holds the dents in, and brass caps that are tacked into the wood frame. This article deals with shortening this older type reed.



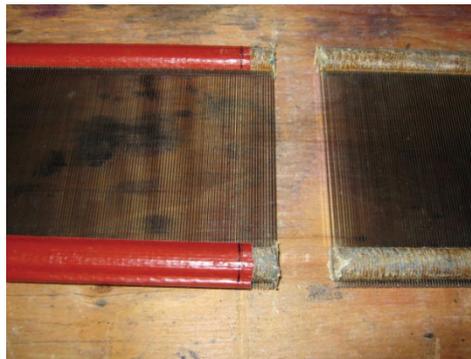
1. My 48" reed needs to be 40"



2. I measured and marked where to cut. The tape was pulled off the extra length but it's not necessary to do this.



3. A small screwdriver is used to pry off the nails and brass caps, saving both. The bar is removed and saved too.



4. I used a hand saw to saw through both sides of the reed.