

Getting Educated 1

Written by David Conroy

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Before I blow a whole lot of money on tools, I did some digging and located the website for the Artist Blacksmith's Association of North America (<http://www.abana.org>). Based on some of the preliminary items there on how to get started in blacksmithing, I picked up a few books to read and keep around for reference.

The books I picked up to start with were:

<p>http://www.amazon.com/New-Edge-Anvil-Resource-Blacksmith/dp/1879535092/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1291260497&sr=8-1</p>  <p>The New Edge of the Anvil - Jack Andrews</p>	<p>http://www.amazon.com/Art-Blacksmithing-Alex-W-Bealer/dp/0785803955/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1291260497&sr=8-2</p>  <p>The Art of Blacksmithing - Alex Bealer</p>	<p>http://www.amazon.com/Backyard-Blacksmith-Traditional-Techniques-Modern/dp/1592532519/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1291260497&sr=8-3</p>  <p>The Backyard Blacksmith - Lorelei Sims</p>
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I began with reading up on the tools of blacksmithing, the types of steel used, and the basic techniques involved. Among other things, discussion of shop design, and different types of forges was very interesting. After reading about the fundamentals, I thought it made sense to look into getting some budget-priced basic tools. I picked up a few hammers at Sears that will fit the bill, and started looking for an anvil.

You'd be amazed how tricky it is to find a workable anvil in New England without spending a modest fortune. Just about every anvil over 100 pounds with anything is selling on ebay for \$300+, and you have to spend gas money to go pick it up. Craigslist offered a few alternatives, and I am reaching out to a few people to see if I can score a bargain. I have a small propane/propylene hand torch mounted to a workbench that is my "forge" and I've dabbled in banging some steel on the anvil portion of my bench vise, but it's rather awkward. I'm looking forward to having a proper anvil.

I plan on building a coal-fired forge made out of a brake drum, firebrick, and some cast iron pipe. The torch is somewhat workable for heating up 1" of steel at a time, but any serious forging will require a larger heat source. Harbor Freight has a wheeled cart for \$39 which would make a decent base that I could wheel out of the garage to keep fumes at bay.

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style="font-size: 12pt;"> </p> <p>I will continue reading and will add blog posts along the way as I have a story to add. Hopefully someday this blog will be a great story about how I became a blacksmith.</p>