

Hand Lapping

Where is the Joy?

In grinding outside of the box.

Hand lapping consists of grinding a piece of glass by hand -- most often with a diamond-embedded hand pad, a diamond file, or silicon carbide grit with some wet/dry sandpaper or with another piece of glass. Although hand lapping seems like a process that would take forever to do, or longer, in all actuality a well done session of hand lapping may get more done than expected -- and be an easy clean up to boot. Hand lapping is one of the great pleasures of coldworking, even if it doesn't sound like it should be.

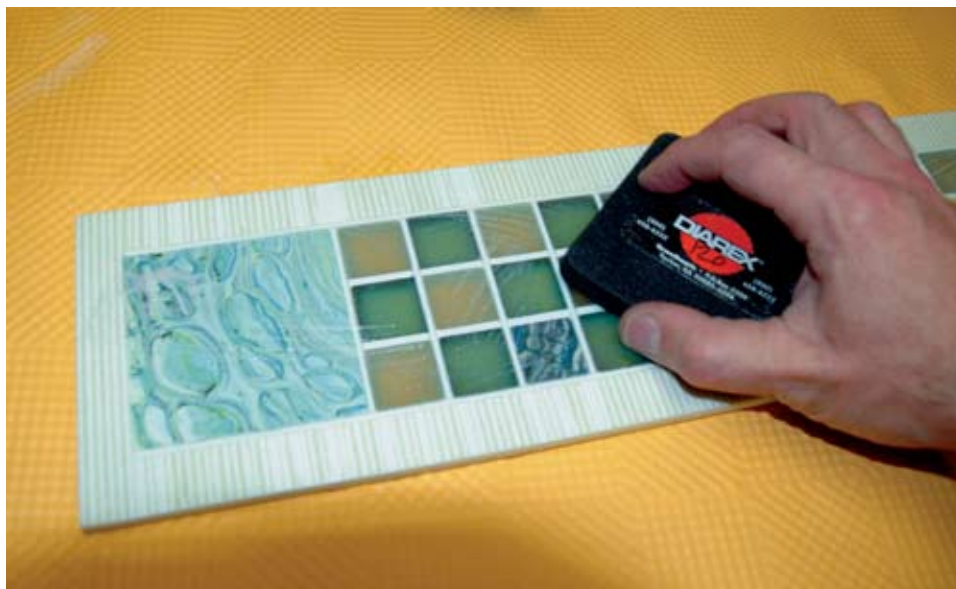
Uses

Diamond pads are very good for grinding all accessible surfaces at all times, since all that is needed is the glass, the hand pad, some water, and some hands. The pad consists of an abrasive-rich plastic surface that is mounted on a sturdy sponge.

Some abrasives are mounted on plastic sticks, not unlike tooth brushes. Other abrasive surfaces are loose, being basically a plastic card with little dots of concentrated diamonds. Often the diamond grinding surface is more durable than the sponge pad it is stuck on. The grinding surface can be removed and mounted on some other tool or form if so desired.

Diamond pads can grind and smooth a small surface quickly and easily, mostly by pressing firmly while using a vigorous circular or back and forth motion with the pad. The diamond pad grinds by scratching, so be aware of how the surface of the glass will look after grinding. If a uniform surface is desired, it is recommended to move evenly and consistently when grinding with diamond pads. Many pieces of cast glass get a diamond hand pad treatment for finishing.

A coarse 70 or 120 pad will remove material quickly and leave a very noticeable, white surface. The 220 and the 400 pads will produce a surface that will be much finer than when rough grinding. Often this extra smoothing takes very little time or



A 120 grit diamond hand pad being used to work on the surface of the glass. Be sure to use enough water to keep the glass well rinsed and clean. Note the clean paper under the glass, used for cushioning the glass and preventing scratches on the backside of the piece. This paper makes for easy clean up by being discarded later on. (Photo: Steve Immerman)