

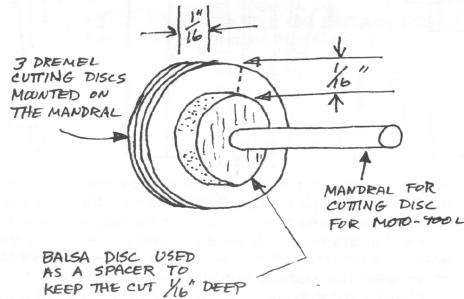
# STRINGER NOTCHES MADE EASY –NO FOOLIN!

by T. Arnold

From a Sept 1992 issue of Scale Staffer, Tom Arnold, Editor

Stringer notches were designed by the devil to make modelers everywhere lose their mamma's religion. The thinner the bulkhead is made for lightness, the easier it shatters as the poor builder uses a piece of folded sandpaper, dull razor blade, or homemade edger with a 1/16" strip of sandpaper glued to it. They all work--horribly. In fact, when it comes to stringer notches and stringer layups all the great resolutions of "this one is really going to be a jewel of workmanship" go out the window and a little voice inside keeps saying "well, thank goodness tissue will cover this up." Repaired bulkheads probably account for a good 20% weight increase alone.

At last technology comes to the rescue in the form of the handy moto-tool (aka Dremel). A terrific "power notcher" is made by mounting 3 cutting wheels on the appropriate shaft and backed up with a balsa disc to control the depth of the cut. Just mark the bulkhead edges with an ink marker where the notches go and a light touch of the cutting wheel cuts a beautiful, sharp, square notch. It takes, literally, seconds to notch stringer locations on a fuselage. The sketch shows it.



(The ideal way to lay up stringers is to cut all the bulkheads 1/16" undersize and then the need for notching is eliminated. However, as you get into scratch bulding many times your plans are necessarily incomplete and a lot of bulkhead shaping is done "in the air" with a sanding block on the partially built framework. You know, the old sightdown-the-fuselage-and-sand-off-the-high-spots trick. In cases like that, having to simultaneously make the bulkheads 1/16" undersize is a little much to contend with.)