Sheet and plate metalwork

When you have read this chapter, you should understand:

- The principles of forming sheet metal and plate by bending
- The meaning of ‘spring-back’ and how to compensate for it
- The types and uses of bending (folding) machines
- The principles of bending in press tools
- The use of press brakes and typical press brake operations
- The methods of calculating bend allowance
- The types and uses of roll-bending machines
- The principles of three-dimensional flow-forming
- The techniques and equipment when flow-forming by hand
- The types and use of wheeling machines
- The techniques and tools used when spinning sheet metal
- The principles, need for, and practice of swaging
- The need for operation planning
- The manufacture of typical sheet-metal rectangular and conical circular products
- Making thin sheet-metal edges safe by wiring and folding
- The use of the universal Jennying machine
Sheet metalwork is the manipulation of sheet metal of 3.5 mm in thickness, or less, using mainly hand tools or portable power tools in order to manufacture a range of diverse products. Plate metalwork is the manipulation of metal plate over 3.5 mm in thickness using mainly power tools. The fabricated products for both sheet metalwork and for thin plate metalwork are produced from flat blanks that have been marked out as discussed in Chapter 5 and then cut out (contoured) prior to forming to shape. The forming operations used range from simple bending and rolling operations to more complex flow-forming operations such as spinning and presswork as shown in Fig. 7.1.

7.1.1 Forming by bending (folding)

The terms folding and bending are loosely used in the sheet-metal industry and largely interchangeable in common parlance. To be precise, the term ‘folding’ refers to sharp corners with a minimum bend radius. The term ‘bending’ refers to deflections of relatively large corner radii. Folding and bending involve the deformation of material along a straight line in two dimensions only.

When a bending force is applied to a workpiece under free bending conditions, the initial bending is elastic in character. This is because the stresses that are developed in the opposite faces of the material are not sufficiently high to exceed the yield strength of the material. The stresses developed on the outside of the bend tend to stretch the metal and are, therefore, tensile stresses. The stresses developed on the inside of the bend tend to shorten the metal and are, therefore, compressive stresses. The movement or strain which takes place in the metal as a result of the initial bending force is elastic only and, upon removal of the force, the workpiece springs back to its original shape.
As the bending force is gradually increased these stresses, both tensile and compressive, produced in the outermost regions of the material, will eventually exceed the yield strength of the material. Once the yield strength of the material has been exceeded, the movement (strain) which occurs in the material becomes plastic and the material takes on a permanent set. This permanent strain occurs only in the outermost regions furthest from the neutral plane (neutral axis). The neutral plane is an imaginary plane situated between the tension side and the compression side of the bend of the material where the metal is neither stretched or shortened but maintains its original length. Its position will vary slightly due to the differing properties of different materials, their thickness and their physical condition. Therefore, there is a zone adjacent to the neutral plane where the strain remains elastic.

On release of the bending force the material adjacent to the neutral plane will try to give up its elastic strain energy and straighten the material out. However, the greater portion of the material which has suffered plastic deformation will resist this release of elastic strain energy and the material will remain bent. Nevertheless, there will be some slight recovery of shape and this is known as 'spring-back'. To allow for this spring-back a degree of 'over-bend' is required. Figure 7.2 shows the effects of a bending force on a material.

In reality, 'free-bending' conditions rarely, if ever, occur intentionally. Folding or bending usually occurs in press tools (pressure bending) or in folding machines. The principle of pressure bending is shown in Fig. 7.3.

**Figure 7.2** The effects of a bending force on a material
7.1.2 Spring-back

Spring-back has already been mentioned in the previous section. We will now consider it in more detail. When bending a material an unbalanced system of varying stresses occurs in the region of the bend. When the bending operation is complete and the bending force is removed, this unbalanced system of stresses tends to return to a state of equilibrium. The material tries to spring back and any part of the elastic stress which remains in the material becomes residual stress in the bend zone. The amount of spring-back to be expected will vary because of the differing composition and mechanical properties of the materials used in fabrication processes. Some materials, because of their composition, can withstand more severe cold-working than others.

The severity of bending a specific material can withstand without cracking depends upon the ratio of bend radius to material thickness.

- A ‘tight’ (small) radius causes greater cold-deformation than a more generous bend in a material of the same thickness.
- A thicker material develops more strain-hardening (work-hardening) than is experienced in a thinner material bent to the same inside radius.
The ‘condition’ of the material being bent will influence the amount of spring-back likely to occur. For example, an aluminium alloy that has been cold-rolled to the half-hard condition will exhibit greater spring-back than the same alloy in the fully annealed condition for the same degree of bending.

### 7.1.3 Compensating for spring-back

Figure 7.4 shows how the clamping beam of a folding machine is specifically designed to compensate for spring-back, whilst Fig. 7.5 shows two methods of compensating for spring-back when using a press-brake or a ‘vee’ tool in a fly press.
Air-bending

The principle of air-bending is shown in Fig. 7.5(a). This allows for various angles of bend to be achieved by three-point loading. These three points are the two edges of the ‘vee-die’ and the nose of the ‘vee-punch’ (top tool). During air-bending, the material retains some of its elasticity. Therefore, the bending angle must be over-closed (over-bend) to compensate for the spring-back that occurs when the tools are opened. The bending tools are designed accordingly, with both the top and bottom tools having ‘vees’ that are less than 90°, usually about 85°. The advantages of air-bending are:

- A smaller bending force is required for any given material.
- The ability to bend heavy (thick) sheets and plates.
- The ability to form various angles in the same tools.

Coining (pressure bending)

The principle of this method of bending is shown in Fig. 7.5(b). The nose of the vee-punch crushes the natural air-bending radius of the material on the inside of the bend. This compression removes most or all of the elasticity from the bent material, resulting in the bend retaining the exact angles of the bending tools. Therefore, when coining a bend, both the punch and the die have an included angle of 90°.

7.1.4 Folding machines

Manually operated folding machines are usually used for folding tinplate and thin sheet metal up to 1.62 mm in thickness. An example of a manually operated folding machine is shown in Fig. 7.6. The smallest width of bending is 8 to 10 times the material thickness and the minimum inside corner radius of the bend is 1.5 times the metal thickness.

The procedure for bending sheet metal in a folding machine is as follows:

1. Clamping. In clamping, the amount of lift of the clamping beam is important. It should be sufficient to allow the fitting and use of special clamping blades (fingers) and to give adequate clearance for previous folds.
2. **Folding.** Care must be taken to see that the folding beam will clear the work, particularly when making second or third folds. Some folding machines are designed to fold radii above the minimum, either by fitting a radius bar or by adjustment of the folding beam.

3. **Removal of work.** Care must be taken when folding to ensure that the work can be easily removed on completion of the final bend. The sequence of folding must be carefully planned. The lift of the clamping beam is important when removing the work. Some folding machines, known as *universal folders*, have swing beams. The work may be folded completely around the beam, which is swung out to allow removal of the work.

Some of the above points are shown in Fig. 7.7.

Figure 7.7(a) shows a section through a ‘box and pan’ folding machine. It is fitted with a standard bed bar and fingers. The sheet metal is shown in position after completion of a right-angle bend when using a standard-angle folding bar.

Figure 7.7(b) shows a small radius bend being made. This time there is a gap between the nose of the folding blade and the face of the folding bar, thus air bending is taking place. This allows a larger radius to be formed.

Figure 7.7(c) shows a series of small return bends being made on this machine using a specially stepped bed bar. Such a bar is very useful for moulded work. The clamping beam lifts high enough to allow that part of the metal on the inside of the beam to be withdrawn over the bar. In this example a narrow blade has been substituted for the standard folding bar. This presents a smaller face width to the folding beam.

Figure 7.7(d) shows the use of radius fingers in conjunction with the standard folding bar. This allows radius bends up to a maximum of 25 mm radius to be made. The radius fingers may be positioned where required on the clamping beam to allow short lengths to be folded.
Figure 7.8(a) shows the variety and combination of bends that can be produced on a standard folding machine, whilst Fig. 7.8(b) shows the use of a mandrel providing the folding machine is fitted with trunnion arms to carry the mandrel. This is only possible if the lift of the clamping beam is adequate. A machine with a clamping beam lift of between 175 and 200 mm will allow a mandrel of 152 mm maximum diameter to be used.

The folding of shallow boxes and pans can also be performed on a universal folding machine, provided there is sufficient lift of the clamping beam to allow an angle clamping blade to be attached to the clamping beam as shown in Fig. 7.8(c).

7.1.5 Bending in press tools

Pressure bending (coining) has already been introduced in Section 7.1.3. This is a common presswork operation for the batch production of small clips and brackets.
A typical vee-bending tool suitable for a fly press (hand press) is shown in Fig. 7.9(a) and a typical U-bending tool is shown in Fig. 7.9(b). For larger components and thicker materials, similar tools can be used in power presses. Dedicated angle bending machines are manufactured and an example is shown in Fig. 7.9(c).
7.1.6 The press-brake

A typical press-brake is, in effect, a power press with a very wide but narrow ram and bed. It may be mechanically or hydraulically operated. Press-brakes are designed to bend to a rated capacity based on a die ratio of 8:1 which is accepted as the ideal bending condition. The meaning of die ratio for a vee-bending tool is explained in Fig. 7.10, whilst Table 7.1 shows the effect of the die ratio on the bending pressure.
required when bending mild steel. Table 7.2 gives the multiplying factors required when bending metals other than mild steel.

For thin material the die ratio may be reduced to 6:1 but the bending pressure will increase. For thick material the die ratio may have to be increased to 10:1 or even 12:1 to keep the bending pressure within the capacity of the machine.

Let’s now consider some typical press-brake operations as shown in Fig. 7.11.
Table 7.2 Bending forces required for metals other than mild steel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Multiplied by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stainless steel</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminium – soft temper</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminium – hard temper</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluminium alloy – heat treated</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass – soft temper</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.11 Versatility of pressure bending. (a) Four-way dies; (b) acute angle tools; (c) goose-neck punches; (d) flattening; (e) radius bending; (f) channel forming; (g) box making; (h) beading (see stiffening of sheet metal)
Figure 7.11 (Continued)
Figure 7.11 (Continued)
Interchangeable four-way dies – Figure 7.11(a)

These are used for air-bending medium and heavy plate. The bottom tool (die) has four ‘vee’ openings depending upon the die ratio required. The ‘vee’ openings have an included angle of 85° to provide over-bend to allow for spring-back. The punch for use with four-way dies has an included nose angle of 60°.

Acute-angle dies – Figure 7.11(b)

Acute-angle dies have many uses and, if used in conjunction with flattening dies, a variety of seams and hems may be produced in sheet metal. These tools are available for any angle but if the angle is less than 35° the sheet-metal component tends to stick in the lower tool (die). Acute-angle dies may be set to air-bend a 90° angle by raising the ram and punch.

Goose-neck punch – Figure 7.11(c)

When making a number of bends in the same component, clearance for previous bends has to be considered. Goose-neck punches are specially designed for this purpose. These tools are very versatile, enabling a variety of sheet-metal sections to be formed.

Flattening (planishing) tools – Figure 7.11(d)

Flattening tools of various forms may be used either in pairs for flattening a returned edge or hem on the edge of sheet metal, or in conjunction with a formed male or female die. Figure 7.11(d) shows a flat male tool (punch) and a formed female tool (die) closing a countersunk seam in a sheet-metal fabrication.

Radius bending – Figure 7.11(e)

A radius bend is best formed in a pair of suitable tools. The radius on the male punch is usually slightly less than that required in order to allow for ‘spring-back’ in the material. Large radii, particularly in plate, can be produced by simply adjusting the height of the ram and progressively feeding the sheet or plate through the tools.

Channel dies – Figure 7.11(f)

Channel dies are made with pressure pads so that the blank material is held against the punch during the forming operation to avoid the blank slipping out of position at the start of the operation. A channel section in heavy-gauge metal is best made in a ‘vee’ die with a ‘goose neck’-type male tool (punch).

Box-making – Figure 7.11(g)

Male punches for box-making must be as deep as possible. Most standard machines are fitted with box tools which can make boxes of any depth up to a maximum of 170 mm deep. For deeper boxes machines with greater die space than standard
are required. For each extra 25 mm of die space (daylight) the depth of the box increases by 17 mm. The punches are made in segments of standard widths to suit any size of box.

**Beading – Figure 7.11(h)**

This shows the three operations required to form a beaded edge. Sheet-metal edges are dangerously sharp and, for safety reasons as well as adding strength and stiffness to the product, have to be beaded, wired (beaded around a wire core) or folded to make them safe. Figure 7.11(h) shows the three operations required to form a beaded edge (hem).

### 7.1.7 Bend allowance for sheet metal

When sheet metals are bent through an angle, the metal on or adjacent to the outside surfaces becomes *stretched*, whilst the metal on or adjacent to the inside surfaces of the bends becomes *compressed*. It is necessary to make allowance for these effects when developing a template or when marking out a blank sheet prior to bending. The enlarged cross-section of a 90° bend shown in Fig. 7.15 emphasizes the importance of the ‘neutral line’.

Because there is a slight difference between the amount of *compressive strain* and the amount of *tensile strain*, the *neutral line* does not lie on the centre line of the metal but lies in a position nearer to the inside of the bend as shown in Fig. 7.12.

![Figure 7.12 Bend allowances for sheet metal](image)

This neutral line is an imaginary curved line lying somewhere inside the metal in the bend. Its position and length does not alter from the original flat length during bending.
For the purpose of calculating the allowance for a bend in sheet metal, the neutral line curve is regarded as the arc of a circle whose radius is equal to the sum of the inside bend radius plus the distance of the neutral line in from the inside of the bend. The precise position of the neutral line inside the bend depends upon a number of factors which include:

- The properties of the metal.
- The thickness of the metal.
- The inside radius of the bend.

Table 7.3 lists the approximate positions of the neutral line for some common materials and should be read in conjunction with Fig. 7.12. For general sheet metalwork the values for the radius of the neutral line may be used (where precision is unimportant). These are shown in Table 7.4.

Generally, the position of the neutral line is 0.4 times the thickness of the metal in from the inside of the bend. Therefore, the radius used for calculating the bend allowance is equal to the sum of the inside bend radius plus 0.4 times the thickness of the metal. Furthermore, the bend radius is rarely less than twice the metal thickness and rarely more than four times the metal thickness. Therefore, for all practical purposes, when calculating the required length of a thin sheet-metal blank when forming cylindrical or part cylindrical work, the mean circumference is used. That is, the neutral line is assumed to be the central axis of the metal thickness. It is only when working with thin plate and thick plate that the neutral line needs to be calculated more accurately. The terminology used when bending metal is as follows:

- **Bend radius** – the inside radius of the bend.
- **Outside bend radius** – the inside radius of the bend plus the metal thickness.
- **Bend allowance** – the length of the metal required to produce only the radius portion of the bend.

### Table 7.3 Neutral line data for bending sheet metal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Average value of ratio $x/T$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild steel</td>
<td>0.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-hard aluminium</td>
<td>0.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heat-treatable aluminium alloys</td>
<td>0.348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stainless steel</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thickness of material</th>
<th>Approximate value of neutral line radius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s.w.g.</td>
<td>mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 19</td>
<td>0.315 to 1.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 11</td>
<td>1.219 to 2.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 1</td>
<td>3.251 to 7.620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 7.1

Calculation – centre line bend allowance

Calculate the length of the blank required to form the ‘U’ clip shown in Fig. 7.13. The position of the neutral line = 0.5T (centre line), where T = 12.7 mm.

Solution

The length (L) of the blank is equal to the sum of the straight arm lengths ‘AB’ and ‘CD’ plus the mean line (radius) length ‘bc’. Thus

\[ L = AB + CD + bc \]

where \(bc\) represents a semi-circular arc whose mean radius \(R\) is equal to the inside radius \(r\) plus half the metal thickness \(T\).

The outside diameter of the diameter of the semicircle is given as 102 mm.

\[ = 49 \]

Therefore, the inside diameter of the semicircle \(= 102 \times (2T)\)

\(= 102 - 25.4 = 76.6 \text{ mm} \)

Therefore, the inside radius \(r = (76.6)/2 = 38.3 \text{ mm}\)

And the mean radius \(R = 38.3 + (0.5 \times 12.7)\)

\(= 38.3 + 6.35 = 44.65 \text{ mm}\)
Example 7.2

Calculation – neutral line bend allowance

Calculate the length of the blank required to form the bracket shown in Fig. 7.14, using the neutral line value of 0.4\(T\) from the inside bend radius, and given that the metal thickness \((T) = 6.35\, \text{mm}\) and the inside bend radius \((r) = 2T\).

![Diagram of a bracket with dimensions labeled]

Figure 7.14 Calculation – neutral line bend allowance

Solution

Length of flats:

\[
AB = 25.4 - (r + T) = 25.4 - (2T + T) = 25.4 - 3T = 25.4 - (3 \times 6.35) = 25.4 - 19.05 = 6.35\, \text{mm}
\]

Length of arms:

\[
AB = 80 - (102)/2 = 80 - 51 = 29\, \text{mm}
\]
\[
CD = 100 - (102)/2 = 100 - 51 = 49\, \text{mm}
\]

Bend allowance:

\[
bc = \pi R = 3.142 \times 44.65 = 140.3\, \text{mm}
\]

Total length of blank:

\[
AB + CD + bc = 29 + 49 + 140.3 = 218.3\, \text{mm}
\]
Similarly:

\[ CD = 32 - 3T = 32 - 19.05 = 12.95 \text{ mm} \]

But

\[
\begin{align*}
BC &= 50 - (r + T + r) \\
&= 50 - (2r + T) \\
&= 50 - (4T + T) \\
&= 50 - 5T \\
&= 50 - (5 \times 6.35) = 18.25 \text{ mm}
\end{align*}
\]

Total length of flats:

\[ 6.35 + 12.95 + 18.25 = 37.55 \text{ mm} \]

The bend allowance radius:

\[
R = r + 0.4T \\
= 2T + 0.4T \\
= 2.4T
\]

Therefore

\[ R = 2.4 \times 6.35 = 15.24 \text{ mm} \]

Bend allowance for bends B and C (90° + 90° = 180°)

Bend allowance:

\[ 2\{\theta \times R \times (2\pi/360°)\} \]

where \( \theta = 180° - 90° = 90° \)

\[ = 2 \times 90 \times 15.24 \times 0.0175 \approx 48 \text{ mm} \]

Therefore, the total blank length = total length of flats + total bend allowance

\[ = 37.55 + 48 = 85.55 \text{ mm} \]

### 7.2 Roll-bending sheet metal and plate

Roll-bending sheet metal and plate is used for:

- Producing cylindrical components.
- Producing conical components.
- Wiring cylindrical edges.

#### 7.2.1 Roll-bending machines

Bending rolls for sheet metal and plate are made in a variety of sizes. Those intended for thin sheet metal and wiring beaded edges are usually manually operated, whilst those for plate work are always power-driven. Bending rolls for sheet metal are
known as *pinch-type* machines, whilst those intended for plate work are *pyramid-type* machines. Also available for heavy-duty plate work are universal machines, which may be used for both *pinch* and *pyramid* rolling.

Figure 7.15(a) shows a set of manually operated sheet-metal bending rolls. The grooves at the right-hand end of the rolls are for wire-beading the edges of cylindrical or conical components. This is a *pinch-type* machine. It has two front rollers that are geared together and lightly grip (*pinch*) the sheet, propelling it through the machine.
There is a third ‘free’ roller at the rear of the machine to ‘set’ the sheet to the required radius. This third roller may be below the sheet or above the sheet.

**Roll-up-type machine**

This has the ‘free’ roller below the sheet as shown in Fig. 7.15(b). Roll-up machines have adjustment on the top or bottom pinch roll to compensate for various material thicknesses and adjustment in the upward direction on the back (free) roller to adjust the set of the sheet to the required radius. As a general rule, the minimum diameter that can be rolled on a pinch-type, roll-up machine is about 1.5 to 2 times the diameter of the rear roller.

**Roll-down-type machine**

This has the free roller above the sheet as shown in Fig. 7.15(c). Roll-down machines have adjustment in a vertical direction on the top and bottom pinch rollers to compensate for various material thicknesses and adjustment in a downward direction on the back roller. This type of machine will not roll more curvature than will pass beneath the pedestal frame.

### 7.2.2 Rolling plate

Rolling machines used for plate work are very much more robust than those used for sheet metal and tin plate. They are always power driven. Whereas heavy-duty, motorized pinch-type rolls are suitable for thin plate work, machines intended for thick plate work are of the pyramid type. These have three rolls arranged in a pyramid formation as shown in Fig. 7.16(a).

Most plate-rolling machines are provided with longitudinal grooves along the lower rolls to assist in gripping and driving the plate. These grooves can also be used for the initial alignment of the plate. The top roll is adjustable up or down and may be ‘slipped’ to allow removal of the work when rolling is complete to form a cylinder (see Section 7.2.3).

Figure 7.19(b) shows the rolls set for ‘pinch-bending’. The main advantage of the three-roll pyramid type machine is that for heavy plate the bottom roll centres are wide apart. This reduces the load on the top roller. Since the bottom rollers are mounted in inclined slideways, the bottom roll centres are automatically reduced as the rollers are adjusted upwards for work on thin plate and small diameters.

Figure 7.17(a) shows the layout of a ‘four-in-one’ universal pyramid/pinch type rolling machine. These machines are capable of performing all the roll-bending operations normally carried out in fabrication workshops. In the hands of a skilled operator it is a universal machine for all types of roll-bending in both thin and thick plate work. Figure 7.17(b) shows the sequence of operations for rolling a section of steel pipeline on a ‘four-in-one’ rolling machine.

### 7.2.3 Slip-rolls

When rolling complete cylinders, the finished cylinder is left surrounding the rear roll, so provision has to be made for its removal. Rolls with this provision are referred to as *slip-rolls*. With most sheet-metal rolling machines the roll around
Figure 7.16 Pyramid-type rolling machine. (a) Pyramid-type rolls (standard design); (b) pyramid-type rolls with adjustable bottom rollers

Figure 7.17 The four-in-one universal pyramid/pinch-type rolling machine showing alternative settings of the rollers. (a) Four-roll pinch; (b) three-roll or offset pinch; (c) inclined-roll pyramid bender; (d) four-roll flattening machine.
which the cylinder is formed is made to slip out sideways so that the cylinder can be removed. The slip-roll on heavy-duty, power-driven plate-rolling machines usually slips upwards for removal of the cylinder.

7.2.4 Cone rolling

It is possible to roll conical components on both hand- and power-operated rolling machines providing the included angle of the cone is relatively small. This is done by adjusting the rear (curving) roller so that it is at an angle in the horizontal plane to the pinch rollers or, in the case of pyramid rolling machines, so that the curving roller is at an angle to the other two rolls.

7.2.5 Ring-bending rolls for angle sections

Ring-bending rolls may be hand-operated by suitable gearing or power-operated. They are used for the cold-bending of channel, angle and tee-section stock to produce bar rings. The axes of the rollers may be either horizontal or vertical as shown in Fig. 7.18.

Ring-bending rolling machines consist of three rollers arranged in triangular formation (similar to pyramid rolls). Each roller can be split into two sections to accept the flat flanges of angle sections or channels as they are being bent. When bending an outside ring, the flat flange of the angle lies in the slots between the two bottom rollers. These slots are adjusted so as to prevent the flat flange from puckering during the roll-bending operation. For an inside ring the flat flange of the angle lies in the slot of the single

*Figure 7.18 Angle ring-bending rolls. (a) Vertical roller arrangement; (b) horizontal roller arrangement*
central roller. Pressure is exerted, during the rolling operation, by a screw arrangement which moves the single central roller towards the gap between the other two rollers.

7.3 Flow-forming sheet metal

So far, we have only considered the bending and rolling of sheet metal and plate in two planes. Flow-forming is the shaping or bending of metal in three planes (three-dimensional). This is much more difficult than manipulating metal in two planes since, in three planes, some part of the metal must be *stretched* or *shrunk* or both.

7.3.1 Flanging sheet metal

Let’s consider a *flange* that is to be ‘thrown’ on a curved surface such as a cylinder as shown in Fig. 7.19(a). It can be seen that the edge of the flange, after externally flanging, has a greater circumference than it had before the flange was thrown. In this case the metal has been *stretched*. Now let’s consider a flange to be worked up around the edge of a flat metal disc as shown in Fig. 7.19(b). It can be seen that, in this instance, the edge of the disc after flanging has a smaller circumference than it had before flanging. In this case the metal has been *shrunk* (*compressed*). Shrinking or compressing the metal will *increase* its thickness.

Figure 7.20 shows how an angle section can be curved by increasing or decreasing the surface area of one flange. In practice metal is not normally removed by the simple expedient of cutting ‘vee-slots’. The surface area is reduced by shrinking (compressing) the metal. This is more difficult and requires greater skill than when producing an externally curved flange because it is much easier to stretch metal by thinning it, than to compress metal by thickening it.

Figure 7.19 Comparison of flanging methods. (a) Left: cylinder before flanging, right: cylinder after flanging; (b) left: disc before flanging, right: disc after flanging
Figure 7.19 (Continued)

Figure 7.20 The effects of increasing and decreasing the surface area of one flange of an angle strip
7.3.2 The principles of flow-forming sheet metal by hand

A craftsperson needs to possess a thorough knowledge of the properties of the materials which he or she has to use. This enables the craftsperson to understand and even forecast the behaviour of materials which are subjected to applied forces and so be in control of the desired direction of flow during flow-forming operations. During flow-forming the metal will tend to work-harden. The degree of work-hardening will depend upon the composition of the metal and the severity of the forming operation to which it is subjected. It may be necessary to re-anneal the work several times during a flow-forming operation to prevent it cracking and splitting.

The techniques used for forming work by hand are similar for most materials. The main differences are concerned with:

1. The force with which the metal is struck.
2. The direction in which the force (blow) is applied.

If a piece of aluminium sheet and a piece of low-carbon steel sheet of the same thickness are struck with blows of equal force, the aluminium, being the softer and more malleable, will deform to a much greater extent than the steel. Since the flow-forming

Figure 7.21 Increasing circumference by stretching. (a) Increased area of metal. The increased area on one flange causes the other flange to curve inwards; (b) decreased area of metal. The decreased area in one flange causes the other flange to curve outwards
of sheet metal is essentially a ‘hammering’ processes, it is most important that we con-
sider the types of blow which can be struck on sheet metal and that each type of blow
has its own field of application for any given purpose.

**Solid blow**

When metal is struck solidly over a steel anvil or ‘head’, the solid blow will stretch the
metal as the typical application in Figs. 7.21 and 7.22 shows. For very soft materials a
wooden mallet is less likely to bruise the metal.

*Figure 7.22* Sequence of operations for producing an external flange on a
cylindrical body
**Elastic blow**

Where either the head or the tool (or both) are made of a resilient material such as wood an elastic blow is delivered. An elastic blow will form sheet metal without unduly stretching it and can be used to advantage to thicken the metal when shrinking it. The use of an elastic blow is shown in Fig. 7.23.

**Floating blow**

Where the head of the anvil is not directly under the hammer a floating blow is delivered. The floating blow is one which is used to control the direction in which the

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**Figure 7.23** Shrinking the edge when hollowing (elastic blows). (a) Tilt to steeper angle; (b) edge caused to wrinkle; (c) use elastic blows
metal is required to flow during the forming process. It is delivered while the metal is held over a suitable head or stake, hitting it ‘off the solid’ so as to form an indentation at the point of impact. Figure 7.24 shows the use of floating blows.

7.3.3 Use of bench tools for forming sheet metal

Craftpersons frequently find it necessary, when suitable machines are not available, to resort to the use of various types of metal anvils and heads when forming sheet-metal articles. These devices are commonly referred to as ‘stakes’ and are designed to perform many types of operations for which machines are not readily available or readily adaptable. Good-quality stakes are made from malleable cast iron or cast steel. They are all sold by weight because of their variety of size and shape.

A ‘stake’ used for sheet metalwork consists basically of a shank supporting a head or horn. The shanks are generally tapered to a standard size and shape at their lower end and are designed to fit into a bench socket. The heads and horns are available in a great variety of shapes and sizes with their working faces machined and polished. Figure 7.25 shows some of the more common types that are available.

Figure 7.24 Raising a flange on a metal disc
Figure 7.25 Typical bench stakes. (a) Hatchet stake; (b) half-moon stake; (c) funnel stake; (d) beak or brick-iron; (e) side stake; (f) pipe stake; (g) extinguisher stake; (h) creasing iron; (j) bench mandrel; (k) planishing anvil; (l) round bottom stake; (m) canister stake; (n) convex-head stakes; (o) horse; (p) long-head stake; (q) round-head stakes; (r) oval-head stake
- **Hatchet stake** – Fig. 7.25(a). The hatchet stake has a sharp, straight edge bevelled on one side. It is very useful for making sharp bends, folding the edges of sheet metal, forming boxes and pans by hand, and ‘tucking-in’ wired edges and seaming.

- **Half-moon stake** – Fig. 7.25(b). The half-moon stake has a sharp edge in the form of an arc of a circle bevelled on one side. It is used for throwing up flanges on metal discs, or profiled blanks, preparatory to wiring and seaming. It is also used for ‘tucking-in’ fired edges on curved work.

- **Funnel stake** – Fig. 7.25(c). As the name implies, this stake is used when shaping and seaming funnels and tapered articles with part conical corners such as ‘square-to-round’ transformers.

- **Beak- or bick-iron** – Fig. 7.25(d). This stake has two horns, one of which is tapered and the other is a rectangular anvil. The thick, tapered horn or ‘beak’ is used when making spouts and sharp tapering articles. The anvil may be used for squaring corners, seaming and light riveting.

- **Side stake** – Fig. 7.25(e). A side stake has only one horn which is not tapered. It is more robust than a bick-iron and can withstand considerable hammering. Its main uses are forming, riveting and seaming pipe work. It is also used when forming tapered work of short proportions.

- **Pipe stake** – Fig. 7.25(f). A pipe stake is an elongated version of the side stake and, because of the overhang, is less robust. As its name implies it is used when forming and seaming sheet-metal pipes.

- **Extinguisher stake** – Fig. 7.25(g). This is very similar to a bick-iron. It has a round and tapered horn at one end and a rectangular-shaped horn at the other. Some extinguisher stakes contain a number of grooving slots on the working surface of the rectangular horn. These are useful when creasing metal and bending wire. The tapered horn is used when forming, riveting, or seaming small tapered articles. It is also useful when forming wrinkles or puckers prior to ‘raising’.

- **Creasing iron** – Fig. 7.25(h). This has two rectangular shaped horns, one of which is plain. The other horn has a series of grooving slots of various sizes. The grooves are used when ‘sinking’ a bead on a straight edge of a flat sheet (i.e. reversing wired edges).

- **Bench mandrel** – Fig. 7.25(j). This is firmly fixed to the bench by means of strap clamps which may be quickly released, allowing the mandrel to be reversed or adjusted for length of overhang. The mandrel is double-ended – the rounded end is used for riveting and seaming pipes, whilst the flat end is used for seaming the corners of pans, boxes, square or rectangular ducting and riveting. It also has a square tapered hole in the flat end for receiving the shanks of other stakes and heads. Bench mandrels are available in four sizes ranging from 20 kg to 114 kg.

- **Planishing mandrel** – Fig. 7.25(k). Planishing mandrels are available in a variety of shapes and sizes. The one shown is called a ‘Tinsmith’s anvil’ and is used when planishing flat surfaces in all types of work. The working surface is highly polished.

- **Round bottom stake** – Fig. 7.25(l). These stakes are available in various diameters and have flat working surfaces. They are used when forming the bases of cylindrical work and for squaring knocked-up seams.

- **Canister stake** – Fig. 7.25(m). This stake has square and flat working surfaces. Its main use is for working in the corners and squaring up the seams when working with square or rectangular products.
Convex-head stakes – Fig. 7.25(n). These are used when forming or shaping double-contoured and spherical work. They are usually available in two patterns – with a straight shank and with an off-set (cranked) shank.

Horse – Fig. 7.25(o). This adaptable stake is really a double-ended support. At the end of each arm (one of which is cranked downwards for clearance) there is a square, tapered hole for the reception of a wide variety of heads. Four typical heads will now be shown.

Long-head – Fig. 7.25(p). This is used when making knocked-up joints on cylindrical articles, and also when flanging.

Round-heads – Fig. 7.25(q). Two types of round head are shown and these are used when ‘raising’.

Oval head – Fig. 7.25(r). This is oval in shape as shown and has a slightly convex working surface. It sometimes has a straight edge at one end.

The condition of the stake has much to do with the workmanship of the finished articles. Therefore, great care must be taken when using them. If a stake has been roughened by centre-punch marks or is chisel-marked, such marks will be impressed upon the surface of the workpiece and spoil its appearance. Therefore, a stake should never be used to back up work directly when centre-punching or cutting with a cold chisel.

A mallet should be used wherever possible when forming sheet metal. When a hammer has to be used, care must be taken to avoid hitting the metal at an angle so as to leave ‘half-moon’ impressions on the surface of the stake. Bench tools that have been abused and damaged must be reconditioned immediately. Regular maintenance will avoid marking the surface of the workpiece. Such marks cannot be removed.

7.3.4 ‘Hollowing’ and ‘raising’

Hollowing and raising are both methods employed for the purpose of flow-forming sheet metal. Basically:

- **Hollowing** is employed when the desired shape is only slightly domed or hollowed. The sheet metal is beaten into a small indentation; therefore, the metal being formed is stretched and its original thickness is reduced.
- **Raising** is always employed where shapes of much greater depth are required. It is a process whereby sheet metal is beaten and induced to flow into the required shape by the application of ‘floating’ blows struck whilst the metal is slightly off the head or former shape being used. The metal formed by raising is compressed and has its original thickness increased.

Figures 7.26 to 7.31 inclusive show the comparison between the two techniques.

7.3.5 Panel beating

Panel beating was originally much in demand when car bodies where built as ‘one-offs’ by highly skilled coach builders. Nowadays car bodies and sub-frames are integrated fabrications assembled by robots from pressed steel panels. Panel beating is now largely relegated to firms restoring vintage and veteran cars and aircraft, firms producing prototypes, firms rebuilding cars damaged in accidents and similar specialist work.
Figure 7.26 The basic tools for hollowing

Figure 7.27 Comparison of hollowing and raising. (a) Shallow depth – this would be formed by hollowing; (b) too deep for hollowing – this would be formed by raising; (c) depth limitations
Figure 7.28 The two basic methods of forming a bowl. (a) Hollowing a hemispherical bowl on a sandbag; (b) shaping a hemispherical bowl by raising – the metal is made to flow over a solid steel head.

Figure 7.29 Taking in surplus metal when raising.
Figure 7.30 Finishing processes for double curvature work. (a) Checking the contour; (b) double-curvature work; (c) overlapping blows

Figure 7.31 Pipe bend fabricated from sheet metal. (a) Pipe bend; (b) working up the throat of one cheek; (c) working up the back of one cheek
The skilled panel beater is a craftsperson who, to a great extent, relies on a good eye for line and form. It is a specialized skill which can only be cultivated by years of experience combined with dexterity in the use of hand tools.

In general, most panel-beating work is carried out on deep-drawing quality steel or aluminium alloy. Although aluminium alloy is softer and more malleable than steel, it is more easily overstretched and great care is required when forming it. Providing they have skills and lightness of touch, many panel beaters prefer working with aluminium alloys which they find responds more readily than steel and is much lighter to handle. Whichever metal is used – steel or aluminium – the techniques used are the same.

Initially, double curvature work is produced by hollowing or raising to the required shape, followed by planishing to achieve a smooth surface finish. In beating certain complex shapes, hollowing and raising are often combined. The planishing operation, which ‘fixes’ the metal to shape and gives a perfectly smooth surface, demands particularly clean, smooth tools whether a hammer or wheeling is used.

### 7.3.6 Split and weld method

This process, as shown in Fig. 7.32, is simpler, less laborious and quicker than other methods of panel beating. It is clear from the paper template being fitted over a wooden former that material is required where the slits open out. Stretching the metal at these points is time-consuming and it is often quicker and cheaper to weld in V-shaped metal gussets. Conversely, when beating certain forms of double curvature where ‘shrinking’ is necessary, it is much quicker to ‘lose’ the surplus metal by simply cutting V-shaped pieces out of it. The workpiece is beaten to shape so that the cut edges meet and then weld them together. An example is shown in Fig. 7.38.

### 7.3.7 The wheeling machine

The wheeling machine is used where sheet metal has to be shaped into double curvature forms. Although their most frequent use is to smooth metal panels that have been roughly beaten to shape, they can be used for ‘crushing’ welded seams and shaping panels of shallow curvature without any preparatory beating.
Figure 7.33 shows a wheeling machine and names its parts. The machine has two wheels or rollers, the upper wheel being almost flat and the lower wheel being convex with both wheels meeting at a common centre. The upper wheel is fixed on its spindle and the lower wheel runs freely and is carried on a vertical pillar which can be adjusted up or down by a screw mechanism to regulate the pressure on the sheet metal. Interchangeable bottom wheels (rollers) are available in a number of shapes to suit work with various curvatures. The wheels (rollers) are made from hardened and tempered steel and polished. They run on anti-friction bearings. A quick-release mechanism is provided for the lower wheel support column to facilitate the insertion and removal of the workpiece without altering the pressure setting. Wheeling machines are available in various sizes, some with additional clearance for large
work such as aircraft cowlings; however, the majority conform to the design shown in Fig. 7.33.

7.3.8 Wheeling processes

The skill in using a wheeling machine lies in acquiring a ‘feel’ for the work as it passes back and forth between the rollers. Panels of moderate curvature can be produced by wheeling alone. The sheet is placed between the wheels and, depending upon the thickness, temper and composition of the material, the pressure is applied accordingly. Repetition of the passing movement between the wheels in both directions, as shown in Fig. 7.34, stretches the metal so that it takes on a convex curvature. It is very important that each backward and forward movement should be accompanied by alteration of direction so that the wheels make contact with the panel in a different place at each pass while ensuring complete coverage of the entire surface. The panel should not be pinched between the wheels too tightly and, by ‘feel’, the operator should allow the panel to follow its own shape during wheeling. The movement is varied until the desired shape is obtained, with those parts of the panel which only require a slight curvature receiving less wheeling that those parts that require greater curvature. Wheeling pressure is applied as required by raising the lower wheel (roller) and, after a few passes, the necessary curvature will be accomplished.

When working with soft metals such as aluminium, which is very easily scratched, it is essential that the surfaces of the tools, rollers and workpiece are perfectly clean. Care must be taken not to put excessive pressure on the workpiece because three times as much ‘lift’ is obtained compared with harder metals such as steel for the same setting. Figure 7.34 shows the basic wheeling process and the means of correcting a common error (corrugation).

Panels of shallow curvature

Panels with very little curvature require the minimum of pressure and should be wheeled to the required shape as gently as possible. Excessive working will result in a fault known as ‘corrugating’ as shown in Fig. 7.34(c). This type of fault is not easily corrected by wheeling as this tends to make the corrugations worse. It may be necessary to reset the panel using a mallet and panel head. However, slight corrugations can be removed by wheeling across the wheel tracks responsible for the fault as shown in Fig. 7.34(d).

Panels of varying contour

The contours of some panels vary from one point to another, with the result that the curve is greater in some places and less in others. In order to produce this variable curvature it is necessary to wheel over the heavily curved parts more often than the surrounding areas as shown in Fig. 7.34(e). A better finish is obtained by lightly wheeling across the panel in a diagonal direction as indicated by the dotted lines.

Panels of deep curvature

Panels with very full contours can be subjected to considerably greater wheeling pressure without danger of corrugating the surface. When wheeling panels of very full shape, the passage of the wheel over work should be controlled so that the start and
Figure 7.34 The technique of wheeling. (a) Correct method of wheeling; (b) section of a panel with a clean contour; (c) section of a panel with corrugation faults; (d) correcting a corrugated panel; (e) wheeling a panel with a varying contour.
finish points of each pass do not occur in the same position, the panel being moved so that the raising of the shape is performed evenly. Sometimes too much shape is wheeled into the panel. This excess shape can be corrected by turning the panel upside down and wheeling the outside edges. With panels of only very slight curvature, this reverse wheeling can be performed over the entire panel.

**Large panels**

An assistant may be required to hold one side when wheeling large panels. Success when wheeling one panel with two operators depends upon each person doing their own pulling. On no account should either operator push the panel whilst the other operator is pulling. Since no two operators have the same ‘pull’, it is important that they change sides half-way through the job to avoid giving the panel uneven curvature. Any roughness when pulling or pushing will cause corrugations and unevenness of shape.

As previously stated, wheeling is widely used for finishing panels that have been formed by the ‘cut-and-weld’ method. The approximate shape and the protrusion of the weld-bead can be smoothed out and brought to the required contour on the wheel after preliminary dressing with a mallet over a suitable panel head. Wheeling not only crushes and smoothes over the weld which will disappear after dressing with a portable sander but, as a result of the cold-working imposed by wheeling, also partially restores the temper of the metal in the weld zone. Metal adjacent to the welded seam will become soft due to the heat of the welding process. Figure 7.35 shows the stages in forming a large roof panel for a prototype motor vehicle.

![Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 7.35** The stages in forming large panels (coach building). (a) Panel shaping; (b) planishing on the wheel; (c) use of a jig
Metal spinning is another method of flow-forming suitable for producing surfaces of revolution. Most sheet metals can be cold-formed by spinning circular blanks in a spinning lathe and applying pressure to make the circular blank flow over a rotating...
The flat blank undergoes plastic flow during the spinning process and the pressure is applied manually through the leverage of spinning tools. This calls for considerable skill acquired through training and experience. The ease with which a metal can be spun depends upon the individual properties of the metal being used. The way in which the change of shape is accomplished is shown in Fig. 7.36(a). The spinning tool is not shown, but the ‘back-stick’ is introduced as a means of preventing the blank from collapsing.

The spinning lathe is much simpler than the engineer’s centre lathe. It consists of a headstock with a solid spindle with a screwed nose to carry the former and a tailstock with a rotating live centre. The tool is supported on a tee-rest similar to a wood-turning lathe. The formers are made from hardwood such as mahogany or lignum vitae for short runs or steel and cast iron for long runs. The basic features of a spinning lathe are shown in Fig. 7.36(b).
7.4.1 The spinning process

The hand-spinning process which is most commonly used is performed with the aid of a number of uniquely designed tools whose hardened working surfaces are shaped and polished according to the nature of the work being spun. Some typical hand-spinning tools are shown in Fig. 7.37. The tools are not standardized and many craftpersons choose to make their own tools.

Hand-spinning tools consist of two parts:

- **The tool bit.** This is approximately 300 to 450 mm long and usually forged to shape from high-speed steel round bar hardened and tempered. Opposite the working end is a ‘tang’ which fits into a long wooden handle.
- **The wooden handle.** This is approximately 600 mm long. The tool bit, when securely fitted, projects from the handle for about 200 mm. Therefore, the average overall length of a hand-spinning tool is between 750 and 850 mm.

The most common spinning tools consist of a combination ball and point. Its range of usefulness is large on account of the variety of shapes that may be utilized by rotating the tool in different directions.

- The **ball tool** is used for finishing curves.
- The **hook tool** is shaped for inside work.
- The **fish-tail planishing tool** is commonly used for finishing work. It can also be used for sharpening any radii in the contour.

The majority of spinning operations involve starting the work and bringing it approximately to the shape of the former, after which ‘smoothing’ or ‘planishing’ tools are used to remove the spinning marks imparted during the initial forming and producing a smooth finish. These hand tools are used in conjunction with a tee-rest.
The manner in which the fulcrum pin is advanced as the spinning proceeds is extremely simple and is shown in Figs 7.38 to 7.41 inclusive. The tee-rest is supported in the tool-rest holder, which is clamped to the bed of the lathe. The tool rest provides a wide range of adjustments in six directions and a further fine adjustment can be made by releasing the clamp bolt and swivelling the tee-rest. All these features are shown in Fig. 7.41. The action of the spinning tool is shown in Fig. 7.39.

When commencing spinning operations, the initial strokes are made outwards towards the edge of the circular blank being spun. In order to speed up the process and to avoid thinning the metal unduly, strokes in the opposite direction are also made, i.e. inward strokes. In both cases it is important not to dwell in any one position on the workpiece so as to cause excessive local work-hardening. The tee-rest and the position of the fulcrum pin are reset as the work progresses and both the forming tool and the
outer surface of the metal blank have to be frequently lubricated. Figure 7.40 shows the metal spinning process.

Back-sticks, as their name implies, are always positioned at the back of the blank being spun immediately opposite the forming tool as shown in Fig. 7.41. They are used to prevent wrinkles forming and, in the case of thin metal, they prevent it collapsing. Pressure is applied in the direction indicated and the work revolves between the back-stick and the forming tool, two fulcrum pins being used in this instance.
Figure 7.40 The metal spinning process

The tee-rest and holder may be adjusted to a variety of positions as work progresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Former</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Sheet metal disc</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Follower</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Fulcrum pin</td>
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Figure 7.41 The use of the back-stick

The forces exerted on the forming tool and back-stick are counter balanced.
7.4.2 Lubrication for spinning

Lubrication is essential in order to minimize the friction between the work and the tool to prevent excessive heating, scratching of the work or damage to the tool. A lubricant must be applied frequently to the surface of the work and tools during the spinning operation. It is important to use the correct type of lubricant. It should adhere to the metal blank and not be thrown off by the high rotational speed involved. For hand spinning, tallow or industrial soap or a mixture of both are used as lubricants.

7.4.3 Spindle speeds for spinning

Spindle speeds for metal spinning are fairly critical, and they will depend upon:

- The ductility of the metal being spun.
- Whether the metal is ferrous (hard to spin) or non-ferrous (easy to spin).
- The diameter of the blank being spun (the larger the diameter, the higher the surface speed).
- The thickness of the metal being spun.
- The shape of the former.
- The shape of the spinning tool used.

The drive to the spindle is usually via a two-speed electric motor and a three-step cone pulley, giving six possible speeds. As a general rule:

- Mild steel requires the slowest spindle speed.
- Brass requires about twice the speed of mild steel.
- Copper and aluminium requires a speed only slightly higher than brass.

7.5 Swaging sheet metal

Swaging is an operation that is used to raise a moulding (swage) on the surface of a sheet-metal component. A swage is produced by means of a pair of special contoured rollers. Swaging rolls are available in a large variety of contours to fit a swaging machine, which may be hand- or power-operated.

The wired edges can also be made using simple bench tools primarily to make the sharp, raw edges of a sheet-metal article safe and also to add strength and stiffness to the article. Although swaging has many similar functions to that of wired beads, it is not just confined to stiffening edges but may be used some distance from the edge of the sheet. The projecting shape of the swage above the surface imparts considerable strength to sheet-metal articles.

Wiring sheet metal not only makes the edges of sheet metal articles rigid and safe, but also provides a pleasing appearance. Wiring or ‘beading’ is a process for forming a sheet metal fold around a wire of suitable diameter. Much of the strength of this type of edge is provided by the wire. Additional strength is obtained from the stressed metal that closely follows the exact contour of the wire. The allowance to be added to the sheet metal is 2.5 times the diameter of the wire. In addition to ‘true’ wired edges, there are also ‘false’ wired edges which may be one of two types:

1. Applied. The applied type is used when the position or metal thickness is unsuitable for normal ‘true’ wiring. Applied wired edges are attached and fastened in position by a return flange, riveting, spot-welding or soldering.
Figure 7.42 Types of wired edge; (a) three common types of wired edges; (b) back-lapped wired edges; (c) cross-section a – a of applied false wired edge; (d) split beading
2. **Hollow.** This type of 'hollow bead' is usually produced by folding the edges around a wire core that is then withdrawn. Although hollow beads are rigid due to their shape and the work-hardening that the process induces in the metal, because hollow edges do not contain a wire they will not withstand an impact blow and are relatively easily damaged. Figure 7.42 shows some types of wired edges, whilst Figure 7.43 shows how a hollow bead may be produced on a spinning lathe.

### 7.5.1 Further swaging operations

The 'ogee', or return curve swage, is frequently used to strengthen the centre portions of cylindrical containers and drums because of its high resistance to internally...
and externally applied forces in service. Examples of the combination of strength and decoration associated with swaging are to be found in the design of circular sheet-metal objects such as drums, dustbins, waste-paper baskets, buckets and water tanks. The maximum thickness of sheet metal that can be swaged is 1.62 mm. Figure 7.44 shows some aspects of swaging.

The swage is a very important part of the automobile industry to add strength and stiffness to large body panels and also to prevent them ‘drumming’, thus reducing the noise level in the passenger compartment. The body panels are formed in

Figure 7.44 The swaging of sheet metal
large power presses, and the correct contour and the swage is formed at the same
time as an integral part of the pressing operation.

7.5.2 The use of stiffeners

Large panels may be reinforced by the application of stiffeners. Usually panels are
stiffened by the fact that they are fastened to some sort of rigid framework. These
frameworks are usually fabricated from metal sections that are inherently strong and
rigid because of their form. Sheet-metal sections may be roll-formed for the purpose
of providing internal and external stiffening of large components of cylindrical or cir-
cular shape.

The edges of fabrications constructed in sheet metal which is too thick to wire or
hem can be stiffened by the use of a flat bar or D-shaped section. It may be attached
by spot-welding, manual welding, brazing or riveting. One of the more common
methods of achieving strength and stiffness is the use of ‘angle-section frames’. Figure 7.45 shows various methods of stiffening large panels. All four edges are
made rigid by folding. A ‘top-hat’ section is used to stiffen the centre section of the
panel and is usually secured in position by spot-welding.

Another method of stiffening large sheet fabrications, also shown in Fig. 7.48, is to
attach them to a rigid framework. The welded section is fabricated from a ‘P-section’,
which has a very high strength/weight ratio for a sheet-metal section. All four edges
of the panel are folded at 90° to a suitable width. The panel is then placed in position

![Figure 7.45 Methods of stiffening large panels](image)
over the frame and the edges are paneled down over the flange of the ‘P-section’. The centre of the panel can be stiffened by means of a diagonal ‘top-hat’ section.

Figure 7.46 shows the use of angle stiffeners. Welded angle frames are widely used as a means of stiffening and supporting rectangular ducting for high-velocity systems. They also serve as a joining media when assembling sections together by bolting as shown in Fig. 7.46(a). The angle section is riveted to the duct and sections of duct are then bolted together – flange to flange – with a suitable gasket between the angle flanges. The large sizes of square or rectangular ducting tend to ‘drum’ as a result of turbulence in the air passing through them. To overcome this drumming it is advisable

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
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\caption{The use of angle stiffeners. (a) Section of rectangular ductwork; (b) diamond-break stiffening of duct walls; (c) welded or riveted}
\end{figure}
to provide adequate stiffening to the walls of the duct. This may be achieved by the use of swaging, but more often a diamond break is used as shown in Fig. 7.46(b).

Simple welded angle frames may be used as a means of supporting and stiffening the open ends of tanks or bins fabricated from sheet metal. Two methods of attaching angle frame stiffeners are shown in Fig. 7.46(c).

### 7.6 Basic fabrication procedure

The production of fabricated components and structures involves five principal operational stages:

1. Measuring, marking out and the production of templates (see Chapter 5).
2. Cutting and preparing blanks from stock material (see Chapter 6).
3. Forming blanks to make the required article (see Chapter 7).
4. Joining and assembly (see Chapters 10, 11 and 12).
5. Surface finishing – galvanizing, electroplating and polishing, vitreous enamelling and painting. These topics are beyond the scope of this book.

#### 7.6.1 The need for planning the sequence of operations

Sheet-metal articles may be made from one or more pieces of metal by the use of hand tools, machine tools or a combination of both. Most components and assemblies involve a sequence of operations that must be planned in order to produce the finished article as economically as possible. The sequence of operations may vary slightly between individual craftpersons and the equipment available in the fabrication workshop. If a sheet-metal article requires a number of joints to be made during the course of its fabrication, the sequence of operations must be planned to ensure that access is possible.

Usually, operations on sheet metal and plate commence with cutting out the blank. This often involves the use of a guillotine shear. It is considered good practice to make a ‘trim cut’ on standard sized sheets or plates to ensure one straight edge is available to use as a datum or service edge from which other measurements and cuts are made. This reduces the size of the flat material, usually in length, and this must be taken into consideration when marking out blank sizes for cutting to ensure maximum yield and minimum waste. Intelligent marking-out on the flat material is essential in order to avoid unnecessary waste in the form of ‘off-cut material’ or ‘scrap’.

#### 7.6.2 Transferring paper or metal templates onto sheet metal

The first operation is to transfer the pattern or template outline onto the sheet metal. When using patterns or templates it is important to position them in the proper manner on the stock sheet in order to avoid unnecessary scrap. Templates must be held in position in order to restrain any tendency to move during the marking-out operation. This initial marking-out operation is shown in Figure 7.47.
(a) Positioning of template or material to avoid unnecessary waste

(b) Transferring a paper pattern on to metal

(i) Place the sheet of metal to be used on the surface of the bench and position the paper to avoid waste
(ii) To prevent the paper from creeping hold it in position with metal weights
(iii) With a hard sharp pencil or scriber scribe the outline of the pattern on the sheet metal
(iv) Remove the weights and the pattern and cut the metal to the outline scribed upon it using universal hand shears removing all burrs with a suitable file

(c) Transferring a metal template on to sheet metal

(i) Place the sheet of metal to be used on the bench with one of its squared sides slightly overhanging
(ii) Position the metal template in position as shown, and clamp it securely with vice grips to restrain any movement
(iii) Scribe the outline of the template on the sheet metal, using a sharp scriber
(iv) Release vice grips to remove template and cut the sheet metal to the outline scribed upon it with a suitable pair of hand shears. Remove all burrs with a file

Figure 7.47 Methods of transferring patterns to metal
7.6.3 Use of notched corners in sheet-metal work

A common requirement for light sheet-metal fabrications is the notched corner, as used in the making of simple folded trays and boxes. Notching is an essential operation where thin gauge fabrications include wired edges, self-secured joints, lap joints and welded corner seams. The term ‘notching’ is used to describe, in simple form, the removal of metal from the edges and/or corners of sheet-metal blanks or patterns prior to carrying out any forming operations in order to facilitate such operations.

Considerable thought must be given to marking out for notching since good notching is of prime importance where the finished article is to have a neat appearance. There is nothing more unsightly than overlaps, bulges and gaps resulting from not allowing for notching, or resulting from bad notching, on the initial blank. It is advisable to make rough sketches of junctions that require notching before starting to mark out the pattern. This simple exercise will enable the craftsman to determine where metal removal (notching) is necessary to make the article.

Usually, the notching of corners on sheet-metal blanks that are to be formed into boxes is controlled by the depth of the box. Unfortunately, a large amount of scrap often results from this notching operation. For example:

- A rectangular tray is required to be made by square notching the corners, folding the sides up square and welding the vertical corner seams. The depth of the notch is 20 mm. **Area removed by notching = 4 × 20 × 20 = 1600 mm²**.
- A rectangular box made in the same way but 140 mm deep will have a **total area removed by notching = 4 × 140 × 140 = 78400 mm²**. By comparison, it can be seen that although the box is only seven times deeper than the tray the amount of scrap metal produced by notching is 49 times greater.

7.6.4 Fabricating a sheet-metal pan with wired edges and riveted corners

Figure 7.48 shows the details and blank layout for making the sheet-metal pan from thin-gauge sheet metal. Table 7.5 lists the tools and equipment required.

The following sequence of operations is required to make the pan:

1. Mark out the overall dimensions for the blank on a suitable sheet of metal of the correct thickness. If a standard size sheet is used, square the sheet by making a trim-cut on the guillotine shear and, using this cut edge as a datum edge, mark out the overall length and width of the required blank. Check the rectangular outline for squareness by measuring the diagonals.
2. Cut out the blank on the guillotine and remove all sharp edges or burrs with a suitable file.
3. Mark off the allowances for the riveted flanges. These are normally positioned on each end of the long sides of the pan.
4. Mark the centre lines for the rivets. **Operations 3 and 4 may be performed after square notching the corners if preferred.**
5. Notch the corners. Care must be taken, when cutting with snips, not to ‘over cut’ the corners. The notching of corners can be performed much quicker and more conveniently on a notching machine. Most machines are capable of making square notches up to 102 mm in depth in sheet metal up to 1.6 mm thick.
6. Mark out the clearance notches at the end of the rivet flanges. These are normally made at an angle of 30° as shown in Fig. 7.48, and may be marked with the aid of a bevel gauge.

7. Mark the positions for the rivets on the flanges and centre punch.

8. Drill or punch the rivet holes. Figure 7.49 shows a ‘tinman’s hand lever punch’, which is used for punching holes in thin sheet metal. Note the conical nipple for aligning the punch in the centre punch mark.

9. Bend the long sides up first in a folding machine to an angle of about 45° and flatten back as shown in Fig. 7.50(a). This provides a crease line for final bending by hand over a hatchet stake after the short sides (ends) have been folded up.
Table 7.5 Tools and equipment required to make a rectangular pan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools and equipment required</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steel rule</td>
<td>These are used for marking-out the blank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight edge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat steel square</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny odd-legs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bevel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scriber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre punch</td>
<td>Required for marking the positions of the rivet holes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nipple punch</td>
<td>The hammer is also used for riveting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillotine</td>
<td>For cutting out the blank and notching the corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal snips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivet set</td>
<td>For the riveting operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folding machine</td>
<td>For bending up the sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench stakes</td>
<td>These are required for completing the bending operations by hand and for wiring the edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting pliers</td>
<td>For cutting the wire and holding it in position during the wiring operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench vice</td>
<td>For bending the wire if a frame is used, and for holding the hatched stake when throwing the flange off for the wired edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinman’s hand-lever punch</td>
<td>May be used for punching the rivet holes in the corner flanges on the blank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drilling machine or portable drill</td>
<td>For drilling the rivet holes on assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.49 Tinman’s hand-lever punch

The die is screwed into the anvil with a special key provided. This key is also used for adjusting the guide.
10. Bend up the ends in the folding machine to 90°. This operation will also bend up the rivet flanges as shown in Fig. 7.50(b).
11. Complete the bending operations over a hatchet stake as shown in Fig. 7.50(c).
12. During operation 11, the flanges have to be knocked back slightly to accommodate the ends. This is rectified by bending the laps over a suitable stake with a mallet as shown in Fig. 7.50(d).
13. Support each corner, in turn, on a suitable anvil or bench stake and mark the centres of the rivet holes through the holes in the flanges with a suitable size nipple punch.
14. Drill or punch the top hole in each corner first and insert a rivet to maintain alignment before drilling or punching the bottom holes.
15. Deburr the holes ready for riveting.
16. The corners are riveted as shown in Fig. 7.51. Further information on making riveted joints is given in Chapter 9.
17. To wire the edge, bend the wire frame in a bench vice and apply it to the pan. Tuck in the bead using a chisel stake and mallet as shown in Fig. 7.51.

Typical faults that can occur when wiring a straight edge are shown in Fig. 7.52.
Figure 7.51 Wiring the edge of the pan

- The bead is tapped along the top edge with a mallet and the sharp edge of the hatchet stake 'tucks' the edge of the metal to the wire as shown opposite.

- The wired edge is placed down in a suitable groove in a crease iron and tightened up by flattening the metal above the wire with a mallet. The wired edge is moved progressively along the groove during this operation until the whole length is tightened.

Figure 7.52 Typical faults when wiring as straight edge

- Not enough allowance
- Too much allowance
- Correct allowance bent too sharp
7.6.5 Wiring cylinders and cones

There are two methods of wiring the edge of a curved surface:

- Wiring in the flat before forming by rolling.
- Wiring the edge after forming by rolling.

**Wiring before rolling**

Figure 7.53 shows how a cylinder is rolled after it has been wired in the flat. *Slip-rolls* are used for rolling cylinders after wiring. The cylinder is rolled over the *slip-roll* so that the cylinder can be removed after rolling is complete. Before inserting the metal, care must be taken to ensure that:

- The wired edge rests in the correct groove in one of the ‘pinch rolls’.
- The machine is checked to determine whether it ‘rolls-up’ or ‘rolls-down’.
The rolling operation reduces the internal diameter of the cylinder in the vicinity of the wired edge as shown in Fig. 7.54 if the edge is wired before rolling. The rolling operation on internally wired edges, rolling after wiring produces the opposite effect to that obtained on externally wired cylinders. The wired edge tends to become slightly larger in diameter than that of the cylinder.

**Figure 7.54 The effect of wiring before rolling**

The rolling operation reduces the internal diameter of the cylinder in the vicinity of the wired edge as shown in Fig. 7.54 if the edge is wired before rolling.

**The rolling operation**

On *internally* wired edges, rolling after wiring produces the *opposite effect* to that obtained on *externally* wired cylinders. The wired edge tends to become slightly larger in diameter than that of the cylinder.

**Wiring after rolling**

Figure 7.55 shows the sequence of operations for wiring the edge of a cylinder after it has been rolled. Rolling can be employed as a final operation to true up the wired edge.
Sheet and plate metalwork

**Figure 7.55** Wiring a cylinder after rolling

- After rolling to shape and fastening the seam the wiring allowance is marked off.

- The edge may be flanged off by hand by the method described in Fig. 7.19.
- An alternative method is to 'jenny' the flange.

- The wire may be cut to required length and rolled into hoop by placing it in a suitable groove on the rolls.
- An alternative is to wire straight from the coil.

- The metal flange is formed over the wire with a mallet, taking care that the ends of the wire are positioned away from the grooved seam.
- The bead may be tucked in on a hatchet stake or by placing the edge on a suitable stake and tucking in with a panning hammer as shown opposite.
- An alternative method is to tuck the edge in on a 'jennying' machine.

- The diagram opposite shows that wiring after rolling produces a constant diameter throughout the length of the cylinder.
7.6.6 Fabricating a domestic tin-plate funnel

The funnel shown in Fig. 7.56 is made from tin plate in two parts, a body and a thimble. Both are frustums of right cones and their patterns are developed by the radial line method previously described in Section 4.15.2. Bend lines are marked out in pencil to avoid damaging the tin plating and allowing the funnel to rust in service. Lines showing where the metal is to be cut can be scribed as usual. The developments for both the body and the thimble are quadrants with the appropriate allowances for the seams and for notching made as usual.

Breaking the grain

Before commencing work on the sheet of tin plate the first operation should be to ‘break the grain’ of the metal in order to prevent ridges forming in the metal. This is done by rolling the piece of metal backwards and forwards a few times though bending rolls set to impart a shallow curvature. The direction of bending is reversed each time. This will ensure that the parts of the funnel will have a smooth surface, free from ridges, when they are formed. Breaking the grain is always sound practice prior to rolling, particularly on metals that have been cold-reduced. Once the breaking operation is complete, the metal should be rolled out flat by suitable adjustment of the rolls in readiness for cutting out the blank and forming to shape.
Making the funnel

Table 7.6 lists the tools and equipment needed to make the funnel, whilst Fig. 7.57 shows some of the operations involved.

1. Cut out the blanks from tin plate that has had its grain broken, as previously described, using bench shears and snips.

2. Fold the locks for the grooved seam, one up and one down as shown at A and B in Fig. 7.57(a) on both the body and the thimble using a bench folding machine.

3. The body may be formed to shape over a funnel stake. This operation consists of bending the body of the funnel by hand with a sliding motion over the stake. A mallet is used for final forming to shape after grooving the seams as shown in Fig. 7.57(b). For further information on making self-secured grooved joints see Section 9.4.

4. The thimble is formed in a similar manner over a long tapering bick-iron as shown in Fig. 7.60(c). It is formed roughly to shape, the grooved seams are interlocked, and the thimble is driven hard onto the bick-iron to hold the seam tight until it is completed by grooving.

5. The body and thimble are joined by soft-soldering as shown in Fig. 7.60(d). For further information on soldering see Section 10.1. The grooved seams are sealed by soldering on the inside.

Table 7.6 Tools and equipment required to make a funnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools and equipment required</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steel rule</td>
<td>These are used for marking out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scriber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillotine</td>
<td>For cutting out the blanks and developed shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench shears</td>
<td>Straight snips may be used for straight line and external curve cutting, but bent pattern snips will be required for cutting internal curves. Universal snips will perform both these operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal snips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling machine</td>
<td>for BREAKING-IN the TINPLATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat bed folding machine</td>
<td>For forming the locks for the grooved seams. An alternative method of performing this operation is to throw the edges over a hatchet stake using a mallet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funnel stake</td>
<td>Used for forming the body of the funnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bick iron</td>
<td>Used for forming the thimble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallet</td>
<td>For stretching lap circumference of thimble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretching hammer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grooving tool</td>
<td>For fastening the seams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldering stove</td>
<td>For soft soldering the inside of the seams and the lap joint between body and thimble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldering iron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting pliers</td>
<td>For cutting wire for the wired edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennying machine</td>
<td>Two operations are required:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Turning the wire allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ‘Tucking’ the edge over the wire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally the top edge of the body has to be wired. Cut a length of wire and roll it into a hoop on the bending rolls. The wire allowance is flanged up on a jennying machine (see Section 7.5.5). The wire is fitted in place and the metal is closed over the wire with a suitable pair of rolls on the jenny, making sure that the butt joint of the hoop is positioned away from the grooved seam of the body.

6. Finally the top edge of the body has to be wired. Cut a length of wire and roll it into a hoop on the bending rolls. The wire allowance is flanged up on a jennying machine (see Section 7.5.5). The wire is fitted in place and the metal is closed over the wire with a suitable pair of rolls on the jenny, making sure that the butt joint of the hoop is positioned away from the grooved seam of the body.

7.6.7 Forming operations using a universal jennying machine

Figure 7.58 shows some examples of the types of wheels or rolls that are used on a universal jennying machine together with the various operations which they perform.

Figure 7.59 shows some typical operations using a universal jennying machine for preparing edges.

- Figure 7.59(a) shows how the rolls can be used to turn up a narrow edge on circular and irregular components ready for wiring.
Figure 7.59(b) shows how the sharp edge of the upper roll can be used for tucking-in wired edges and also for turning single edges on curved work and discs. The vee-shaped rolls shown in Fig. 7.59(c) are ideal for turning up a double edge on elbows for paned-down or knocked-up seams. For a wired edge the allowance must equal 2.5 times the diameter of the wire. This measurement is taken from the face of the ‘gauge’ to the centre of the upper roll as shown in Fig. 7.59(d). The gauge is adjusted, usually by a knurled screw, at the side of the machine. After setting to the required measurement the gauge is locked in position.

Caution: When using sharp edged rolls for flanging operations, do not over-tighten the top roll. If the top roll is too tight the metal will be sheared. The top roll should be adjusted so as to afford only a light grip on the metal between the rolls.

When flanging a disc, a small piece of thin, scrap metal folded as shown Fig. 7.60 should be used to prevent injury to the operator’s hand. As an extra precaution remove all burrs from the metal blank before commencing the operation.
Figure 7.59 Edge preparation on a jennying machine

Figure 7.60 Safety precaution when flanging a disc with the jenny
7.1 Forming sheet metal and thin plate by folding and bending

a) Explain what is meant by ‘spring-back’ and explain how this effect may be overcome.

b) With the aid of sketches explain the difference between ‘air-bending’ and ‘pressure-bending’.

c) With the aid of sketches illustrate the principle of operation of a manually operated folding machine.

d) Sketch a typical U-bending tool suitable for use in a fly press and label its principal parts.

e) Describe in what ways a press-brake differs from a power press and show a typical example of its use.

f) With the aid of sketches explain what is meant by ‘the neutral line’ when bending sheet metal and thin plate, and explain the difference between neutral line allowance and centre line allowance when calculating the sized of a blank.

g) For the component shown in Fig. 7.61, calculate:

i) The neutral line blank length
ii) The centre line blank length.

d) Describe what is meant by the ‘flow-forming’ of sheet metal.

e) With the aid of sketches show how a flange may be ‘thrown’ on the end of a sheet-metal cylinder.

f) When using a hammer or a mallet, describe the differences between:

i) a solid blow
ii) an elastic blow
iii) a floating blow.

g) With the aid of sketches explain how a hemisphere 75 mm diameter can be raised from a flat copper blank 1.00 mm thick using hand tools only. List the tools required and describe any inter-stage heat treatment that may be necessary as the metal work-hardens.

h) Describe the difference between ‘hollowing’ and ‘raising’.

i) Briefly describe why the ‘split and weld’ technique is used when panel beating.

j) Describe the essential requirements of a wheeling machine and the purpose of its use.

7.2 Roll-bending sheet metal and plate

a) With the aid of sketches explain the difference between ‘pinch rolls’ and ‘pyramid rolls’.

b) With the aid of sketches explain the difference between ‘roll-up’-type machines and ‘roll-down’-type machines.

c) Explain:

i) the purpose of ‘slip-rolls’

ii) the difference between cylinder rolling and cone rolling.

d) Describe what is meant by the ‘neutral line’ when bending sheet metal and thin plate, and explain the difference between neutral line allowance and centre line allowance when calculating the sized of a blank.

7.3 Metal spinning

a) Describe the essential differences between an engineer’s centre lathe and a sheet metalworker’s spinning lathe.

b) With the aid of sketches explain the basic principles of metal spinning.

c) Explain what is meant by a ‘back stick’, why it is required and how it is used.

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**Figure 7.61**

- Sheet and plate metalwork
- 345
- Exercises
- 30 mm
- 3 mm
- R 9 mm
- 50 mm
- 90 mm
- 65 mm
- Material: Mild steel 20 mm wide strip
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d) Why must the blank be lubricated when spinning and what special property must the lubricant possess?

7.4 Swaging and stiffening processes
a) With the aid of sketches describe the essential principles of swaging and why this process is often required in sheet metalwork.
b) State the reasons for wiring the edge of a sheet-metal component and, with the aid of sketches, show how a straight edge may be wired.
c) With the aid of sketches show how the ends of a cylindrical sheet-metal component may be wired.
d) Explain why stiffening is required for large sheet-metal surfaces and, with the aid of sketches, show TWO examples of applied stiffeners.

7.5 Fabrication planning and procedures
a) Describe how the outline of a template may be transferred to the sheet-metal stock from which a blank is to be cut.
b) Explain why notched corners are often required when making sheet-metal products.
c) Sketch a blank layout and write out a planning sheet and a list of tools required to make the box shown in Fig. 7.62.
d) Describe the procedure for making the box shown in Fig. 7.62.

Figure 7.62