

DOP IT SQUARE!

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New-comers to faceting will find that the literature is full of advice on the dopping procedures. Some of these are unnecessarily complicated and advocate a range of heat lamps, irons, spirit stoves, hotplates, painting the stone with shellac, light bulbs etc. all geared up to getting the stone warm to stick to the dop. Very few address the basic requirement of getting the stone on the dop square.

Failure to accomplish this simple task will give you no end of trouble later in the faceting procedure especially with regards to getting the girdle right and the table parallel to the girdle.

The following method works for me and I commend beginners who are having trouble to give it a try. You will need:

1. A packet of 'Fimo' modelling clay, available from craft stores.
2. A pencil made from 1/8" aluminium welding rod. (Grind one end to a point and the other to a flat chisel.) This is excellent for marking the stone for what ever reason. You can highlight a facet for instance by drawing the flat edge of the chisel along the facet edges.
3. A pencil butane torch, available from DIY stores eg: 'B&Q'
4. Your standard dopping transfer jig.
5. Your favourite dopping wax. I use brown wax, I got a chunk the size of a house brick about 40 years ago when I used to cut cabochons and believe it or not it is still as good as new after 40 years in a tin in my garage.
6. A pair of miniature tongs available from craft stores, I use these for holding chips of wax when building up a fillet round the dop.

First cut a flat surface on the stone on a plane parallel to that which you want the table to be in. A 600 grit finish is about right.

Using your aluminium pencil, make a cross exactly where you want the centre of the dop to land.

Put the stone aside and take a piece of 'Fimo' clay, you will find it quite crumbly but work it in your hands for a while until you can fashion it into a ball.

Press this ball into a fairly large conical dop and place the dop in your transfer jig, now press the stone, table up, lightly, into the clay.

Take your smallest dop and fit it in the other end of your transfer jig then press the stone over till your mark is directly under the small dop and level the stone by eye.

Replace your small dop with a large flat dop and use this in the transfer jig to press the stone down into



Photo 1

the clay. Hold the jig up to the light and check that there is no daylight between the table and the flat dop in all directions.

When you are happy that this is the case, squeeze some 'Fimo' around the stone to further support it if required, leaving the table area and edge clear of 'Fimo'.

Check that the stone is still centred with your small



Photo 2

dop then give the table a clean with meths, wiping it dry and take care not to disturb the stone in its bed of clay.

Select the dop which you want to attach to the stone. It can be flat or conical; a good flat dop has concentric grooves machined in the face to hold the wax (it is best to err on the side of small rather than large when selecting the dop). If you prefer to use a conical dop, make sure that you will not need it later for the pavilion.

Clean the dop with meths and put the dop upright in your transfer jig. Melt a good blob of wax on the



Photo 3