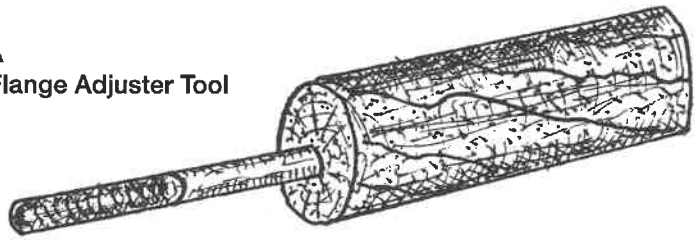
SULL'S FLANGE ADJUSTER TOOL
for OBLIQUE PENHOLDERS

For penmen, penwomen, calligraphers, and hobbyists who enjoy the activity of ornamental pointed-pen writing using an Oblique Penholder, a common situation is being able to properly readjust the curvature and/or open space between the two "leaves", or "inside surfaces" of a flange that has become bent, misshapen, or misaligned over time. Also, if a person wishes to properly fit a new penpoint in the flange- a new point that has a curvature much different than the point previously held by the penholder, it is often challenging and frustrating to properly re-bend the metal flange correctly to accommodate the new pen point. The Sull Flange Adjuster Tool [Figure A] has been created to assist the calligraphic artist in this endeavor.

Figure A
The Sull Flange Adjuster Tool

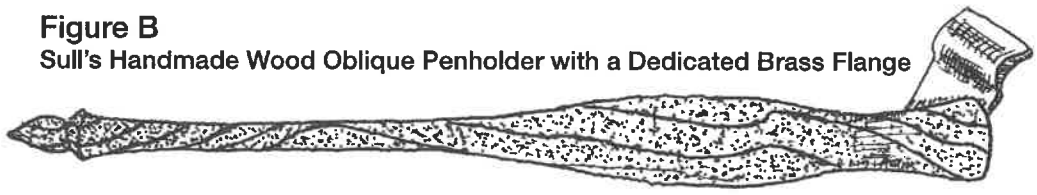


NOTE: This product is intended for use with wood-handled oblique pen holders that feature a dedicated flange design (see below). Do not use this product with adjustable-screw Bullock-style oblique penholders, and also do not use this product with plastic-handled oblique penholders. The manipulation of the Flange Adjusting Tool within the flange of a plastic-handled penholder will create enough torque and pressure that the plastic "head" portion of the penholder will crack.

DEDICATED FLANGE DESIGN

NOTE: This is the oblique penholder design [Figure B] *that Sull's Flange Adjusting Tool and/or Flange-Adjusting Kit is of most benefit to the owner.*

Figure B
Sull's Handmade Wood Oblique Penholder with a Dedicated Brass Flange



Terminology: A *"Dedicated Flange Design"* simply means that because there is no screw mechanism on the Flange for tightening or loosening the amount of space for a penpoint to be held securely, it is necessary for the curvature of the flange to be very similar to the curvature of the penpoint. Therefore, if both of these curves- that of the flange and the penpoint- are alike, then when a point is inserted into the open space between the upper and lower "leaves" of the flange, you have essentially created a flange and point "sandwhich". If the curvature of either of these- the flange or the penpoint, are significantly dissimilar to each other, then the flange will have a tendency to "pinch" the point with excessive pressure, rather than just holding the point securely. This can result in the point being held in a position that is misaligned (not parallel) with the leaves of the Flange, and thus the point is held in a "twisted" position. Such a position is often noticeable with the point feeling very scratchy when writing on up-strokes.

Common Circumstances for Using Sull's Flange Adjusting Tool

The following circumstances occur frequently:

1) When a person purchases a new Oblique Penholder that features a "Dedicated Flange Design", it is unfortunately common for the penholder to arrive with the flange leaves compressed so close together that it is very difficult for the new owner to insert a new penpoint into the flange. This means that the individual who either made or sold the oblique penholder did not take the time to initially adjust the flange properly to hold a specific point.

2) After a person has or uses an oblique penholder for several months or more, the opening between the leaves may open up a bit more simply because of all the times a new penpoint has been inserted. When this occurs, the flange no longer holds the point securely and the point will often be a little loose instead of snug.

3) If, over a period of time, the owner of the oblique penholder has tried to re-bend the flange somewhat frequently to fit in a new point of another manufacturer, curvature, or size, the flange will often become mis-shapened from too much bending.

To correct any of these situations, the flange must be properly opened up or re-bent to once again effectively, and securely hold a penpoint.

Flange-AdjustingTool

To open-up a flange that has been compressed (squeezed together too tightly), lay the penholder, with the underside facing up, in your hand as indicated in Figure C:

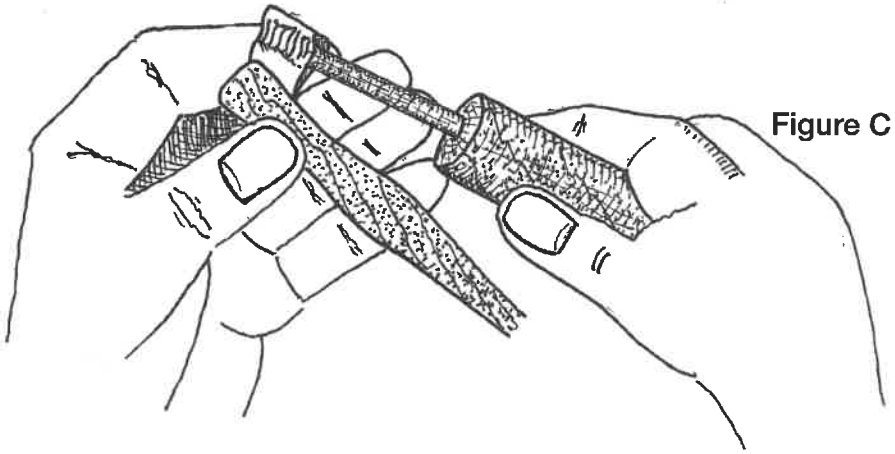
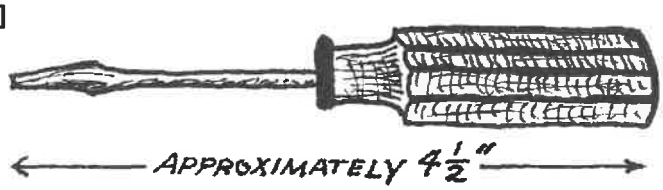


Figure C

With your opposite hand, gently push and wiggle the Flange Adjusting Tool so as to have the hollowed-out section of the tool inserted all the way through the length of the flange. Now roll the tool back and forth with enough pressure until you can feel the flange open up so that the shaft of the Flange Adjusting Tool no longer feels snug and tight, but is just loose enough so that you can back it out from the flange with no difficulty.

In case the flange is compressed so tightly that it is difficult to wedge the end of the Flange Adjusting Tool's hollowed-out shaft in between the two leaves of the flange, use a small screwdriver [Figure D] to help pry the two leaves apart from each other so that you can wiggle the hollow shaft of the Flange Adjusting Tool into the flange. Small screwdrivers can easily be purchased at hardware or hobby stores.

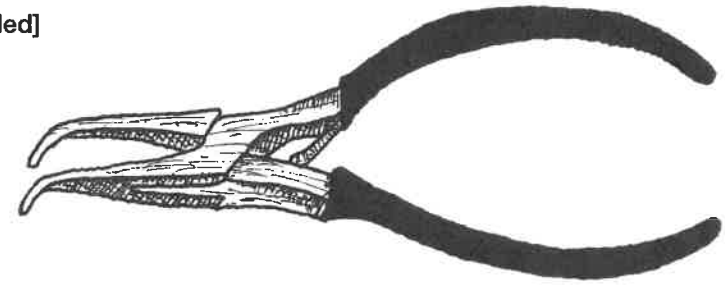
Figure D
[not included]



After you have been able to fully insert the Flange Adjusting Tool into the flange of the penholder and have manipulated it by wiggling or rolling the tool so that you can easily remove it from the flange, try to insert your penpoint. If the point still does not fit, repeat the previous step and wiggle or roll it a greater distance from side to side until you have opened up the flange to a wider degree. Continue this process until the penpoint slides into the flange without difficulty.

If the point is now too loose within the flange, use a small bent-needlenose pliers to gently squeeze the edges of the flange's leaves together until the point feels secure without movement. This type of needle-nose pliers can be purchased from John Neal, Bookseller, or from a hobby store.

Figure E
[not included]



CONCLUSION

Please note that despite all of the information given, selecting an oblique penholder for yourself is a most personal decision. I shy away from overly ornate penholders, or from penholders that exceed approximately 8 inches in length. Such penholders are really an extravagance and are made more for their own place in a person's collection of penholders rather than for everyday use. Almost invariably, holders that are very fancy and of a length longer than 8 inches tend to feel very unbalanced in one's hand. Above all, never forget that an oblique penholder is a tool which is very unique in design, function, and purpose. When used properly and feeling comfortable in your ability to move, manipulate, and create both hairline and shaded strokes, the holder literally becomes part of you; an extension of your arm, hand, and fingers. Treat it with care, keep it clean from ink residue, and always clean the point after you've finished writing. Your holder will be your friend for life. I hope that this information is helpful.

Michael Sull, Master Penman, April 2022

MichaelRSull [for flange adjuster videos and photos]