

Skill Level Guides

It is very important for instructor and student alike to be able to identify skill levels. The following is meant to help place students in a class with the greatest comfort and potential for their success and safety. These skill levels are preferred for classes to function at their best. We strongly recommend you place yourself in a workshop that best suits your skill level. If you are **unsure**, contact us at 207-777-3375 or email us: dglaser@newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com

For Blacksmithing:

Beginner: Little to no experience. Having never lit a fire or hit hot metal.

Seasoned Beginner: Having a few basic **classes** under your belt from various schools or other competent blacksmiths, begin competent to fairly proficient with all basic forging processes and the use/operation of the standard tools and equipment of the trade.

Intermediate: The above plus 3 years of part-time to full time in the forge and a good working knowledge/experimentation of joinery, tool making, forge welding and efficiently forging clean tapers, shoulders, drawing stock down to dimensions, spreading stock, layout and design.

Advanced: The above plus 4 years of more serious work, small to medium size projects, a proficient working skill base of joinery, tool making, forge welding, layout, completely proficient in all major forging processes, tools and equipment.

For Bladesmithing:

Beginner: Little to no experience. Having never lit a fire or hit hot metal.

Seasoned Beginner: Having a few basic classes under your belt, competent and fairly proficient with all basic blade forging processes and the use/operation of the standard tools and equipment of the trade. Having made a few full tang or stick tang knives and knowing basic handle construction. Having dabbled in Damascus. Starting to feel confident in heat treat and metallurgy.

Intermediate: The above plus 3 years of part-time to full time in the forge and a good working knowledge/experimentation of guards, confident in forging full tang and stick tang knives and are producing clean handle fit ups as well as confidence in layout and design. Able to make all the basic Damascus patterns cleanly and predictably. Confident in heat treat and metallurgy with consistent results.

Advanced: The above plus 4 years of more serious detailed work, trying small production runs, working with Damascus, having tried a folder of some sort, perhaps experimenting with inlay, engraving or file work and have a shop to work in on a regular basis.