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## Making Watch Hands à la Roger Smith

by [J. Edwards](#)

English watchmaker, [Roger W. Smith](#), has [posted a series of videos](#) detailing the process he uses to create the unique set of hands that have come to define his distinctive style of watchmaking. Being the only apprentice that renowned watchmaker, [George Daniels](#), has ever taken under his wing, this short series of how-to videos is particularly precious in that they bring to life aspects of Daniels' treatise, *Watchmaking* – which is undisputedly the most thorough book ever published on the subject. To put the value of the book's contents into a bit of perspective, the aftermarket price for used copies of *Watchmaking*, in excellent condition, have [soared to as much as \\$1,100](#) in recent months (the prices at [Abebooks](#) are still somewhat more reasonable).

While the videos don't come close to even scratching the surface of what *Watchmaking* covers, they do offer valuable, second-hand insight into chapters 3 and 6 of the book, which discuss finishing techniques and the making of small components, respectively. I found it particularly neat to see Smith's take on the brass rod polisher that Daniels' details on pages 56 & 58 of the revised edition of *Watchmaking*. I also found it interesting to see that Smith uses a pair of bronze tweezers, similar to the ones we mentioned here on the blog [back in December](#).

If you don't have time to take in the full set of 10 videos, here is a quick synopsis of some noteworthy highlights:

1. Part 1 details Smith's process for **hardening and tempering**. Having always stuck to using brass shavings and a controlled heating element for tempering, I was both surprised and impressed by the speed and simplicity of Smith's method of tempering.
2. The last few seconds of Part 3 demonstrate a simple way of **preparing a polishing rod** for coarse polishing.
3. Part 5 outlines the process for **fine polishing**.
4. At 2:21, in Part 6, Smith shares an excellent tip about having created a **pre-emptive "pip"** in the second hand, prior to hardening, to aid in the finishing



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process. (If you are interested at all in creating your own macro-videos, it's neat to note the [GorillaPod](#) in the background of Part 6, as well)

5. The technique of **rubbing the hands** on a heated brass block where they haven't yet achieved the level of bluing desired, as detailed in Part 7, is a valuable tip.
6. Part 9 demonstrates a method of achieving a **black polish** on steel using nickel.
7. In Part 10, it is interesting to note that Smith uses a **dial ring in lieu of dial feet** to hold the dial in place. The footage towards the end of this video clip offers a good close-up of this.

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