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Welding: A Handy Skill For Many Situations.

By Josephine Stungger

Welding is the well known skill of taking two pieces of metal and fastening them together in very strong fashion. Most people have heard about it and understand at least the above concept but don't really understand how useful it is.

Welding is used in more than just the steel construction industry. Anything metal that is formed from more than one part has most likely been welded. Things ranging from car bodies, to farm equipment, to underwater oil rigs, to custom mufflers, to sculptures...and on and on. There are separate welding techniques for each application whether it be the type of joint you are forming or the type of metal you are working with. There is spot welding, arc welding, stick welding, underwater welding, steel welding, aluminum welding, brass welding, copper welding, etc. You can weld big rugged things like axle assemblies, or tiny fine parts which require an flair. Basically in any industry and for every set of desires gifts, and abilities—there are applications for this wonderful skill.

Welders are in demand and paid well too. There just aren't enough welders for all of the welding that needs to be done. And this is a universal need in every area geographically and in every area of business, in this country and throughout the world. So whether you are a handyman, or hobbyist, or need a great job here is a great skill to master and use. Welding classes are available at most local community colleges and career centers and once you are certified you will never regret it. You will be on your way to making your life, job, hobby—whatever—better!

You shouldn't get the wrong idea though, one class isn't going to teach you every technique and just like everything else with experience comes perfection and ease of welding technique. A good idea is to get a mentor that you can observe, learn tricks from, bounce questions off, and get constructive feedback from. This can be done on a personal level or more easily probably by reading information written by master welders and then contacting them.

So if you want to learn more about the many ways welding can jumpstart your career or make your job/hobby better than go take a class, then start practicing welding and read all you can from well known authors.

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Josephine Stungger has taught beginning and advanced welding classes for years at her local community college. A sculptor on the side, she has perfected many highly specialized welding techniques. To learn more visit

<http://www.learnwelding.info>

Welding Basics For Beginners

By Kenzie Thompson

Welding has been around for centuries, though not in the forms most commonly used today. One of the first welding processes ever used was known as forge welding. Forge welding attempts to join two metals through a process of heating, and then pounding and striking. It's what blacksmiths did. But since then, there have been quite a few advancements in the welding world. With these new methods and techniques, welding has left the confines of industrial settings and can now be done practically anywhere - even underwater or in outer space!

As you can guess from the history of welding, the ability to join two or more pieces of metal together in a strong bond has been fundamental in our advancements in all areas of life, from housing to transportation; from manufacturing to repairs. Understanding welding basics can come in handy at work, but it will just as often come in handy around the house, in the workshop or on the farm. Because of this, welding is a skill that almost anyone can benefit from, male or female, young or old.

Why Weld? If you own any equipment or machinery that is metal, welding will certainly serve as a useful skill. Some typical goals of a welding job include:

- Fixing stress cracks
- Reinforcing weak joints, and
- Cutting/shaping new parts and adapters from raw plating.

For chores like these, many welders rely on a process known as arc welding. Arc welding is a method where during the welding process, an electrical current jumps through an air gap (between a positively charged electrode and a negatively charged steel plate) and produces an enormous amount of heat. This heat is produced at the end of a welding rod, and when it does, metal can be melted. Well, it's a little more complicated than that, but the concept is the same.

Perhaps the most common and economical welding method used today is AC (alternating current) arc welding. You can locate a simple AC welder just about anywhere, such as your local farm store or home improvement center. This welding process is ideal for most of your simple, routine welding jobs. Therefore, AC arc welding is ideal for those of you just starting out.

Minimize Your Risk While arc welding isn't incredibly complicated, there are a few risks and hazards that you should be aware of:

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1. Exposure to radiation 2. Flying sparks (in the form of globs of molten metal) 3. Electric Shock 4. Fumes 5. Damage to your eyes, and 6. Burns

However, by wearing protective clothing and specialized welding helmets and other gear, you can greatly reduce the inherent risks of welding. Here are a few other tips to help keep you safe while arc welding:

- Make sure to work on a dry floor. Wear thick rubber shoes and dry leather welding gloves.
- Be sure to use insulated electrode holders.
- Check to make sure that your equipment is all properly grounded.
- Keep your work area properly ventilated to avoid inhaling any potentially toxic fumes.
- Be on the look out for flying bits of melted metal.
- Most importantly, be aware of any other people

who are around you. If they aren't wearing the proper gear, then keep them away from your project.

This will get you started welding safely - one of the most important things when learning a new craft.

Kenzie Thompson practices both ornamental and industrial welding on his 5 acre ranch in Northern California. For more information on Welding Basics, visit

<http://www.weldingadvisor.com>



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