

Spreading Tongs



Anyone who has made small scrolls has occasionally found that a turn of the scroll is too small, or that two turns are too close together. Scrolling tongs are great for squeezing things together, but are not very convenient for pushing things apart. Similarly, anyone who makes spiral baskets will often need to do a bit of fine-tuning: squeezing a pair of rods at one place while spreading them apart at another place. Scrolling tongs are good for the first part of that operation, but not for the second.

The tongs we're all used to are made like pliers or scissors: when you squeeze the reins together, the jaws close. It is possible to use scrolling tongs to push the sides of a scroll turn outwards, but to do so requires spreading the reins apart, which is not easy for human hands. Spreading tongs work in a way opposite to normal tongs: Squeeze the reins together and the jaws *open*. They allow you to enlarge a scroll turn using just one hand, leaving the other hand free to grasp the workpiece or another tool.

Here is a primitive version of spreading tongs:



Here is a slightly more refined version, in a nearly closed position:



Here are the same tongs, in the open position:



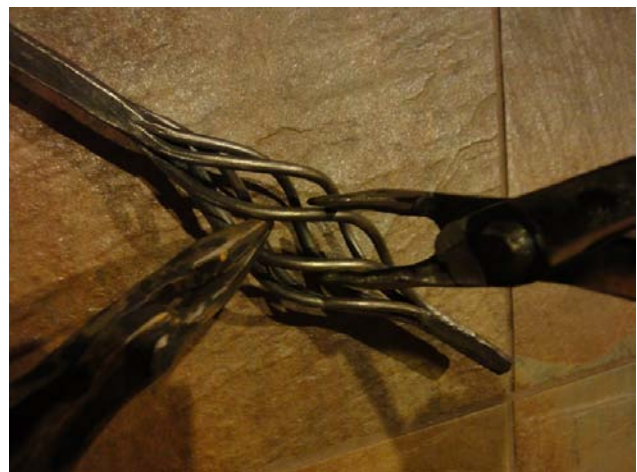
This tong design is particularly useful in some situations:



And here are some ways spreading tongs can be used:



Adjusting a scroll with spreading tongs



Adjusting a spiral basket with spreading and scrolling tongss

I made my first pair of spreading tongs on a whim four years ago, and found them so useful that they have since become a key item in my smithing toolkit.

Steve McGrew
Incandescent Ironworks Ltd.
www.incandescent-iron.com
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