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How to Choose and Use a Bucking Bar

The bucking bar is the quiet half of riveting.

Choosing the bar

Choice	What the Handbook says	If you get it wrong
Shape	First consideration. The face is usually concave to fit the shop head; complicated bars are forged or built up by welding	A wrong shape deforms the rivet head
Weight	From a few ounces to 8 or 10 lb, depending on the work. No weight-by-rivet table is given	Too light: the sheet bulges toward the shop head. Too heavy: it bulges away
Material	Low-carbon steel, case hardened, or alloy bar stock. Better steel lasts longer and needs less reconditioning	Soft faces dent and stay marked
Face	Hard enough to resist indentation, not hard enough to shatter	A dented face prints on the rivet
Edges	Slightly rounded, clean, smooth and well polished	Sharp edges mar the sheet around the rivet

Typical mistakes

Mistake	What you see	Fix
Bar tilted	Bent shank, marred skin	Face square to the shank
Bar too light	Material bulges toward the shop head	A heavier bar
Bar too heavy	Material bulges away from the shop head	A lighter bar
Bearing down hard	Little rebound, poor head	Let the weight work; guide with the hands
Bar lifted early	Set driven through the material	Hold it until the last blow

Key points

- **Not approved data.** The SRM or drawing may call for a specific bar or method.
- **No weight table.** The FAA handbooks give no weight per rivet size; none is shown here.

SOURCES · FAA-H-8083-31B, AMT Handbook: Airframe, Chapter 4

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 Educational reference only, not approved data. Always consult the applicable SRM, AMM, or AC 43.13-1B and your certifying authority.