

FORK

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Mild steel is cheap, readily available and probably should be used for most forge work. Knowing what you are working with speeds up the work and saves overall cost.

Forging problems can be avoided by using the correct sized material to start with. Use a large enough piece and you will avoid upsetting. Upsetting is one of the more difficult of the seven basic steps in blacksmithing. It is tempting to use too small a dimension.

Most methods of making forks as outlined in literature seem awkward to me. I make forks in the following manner.

Forge enough of the end of a piece of 3/16" x 3/4" mild steel, 1018-1020 (not A36) to a wedge shape. Keep the thickness at 3/16". You now have a shape like #1. Next use your 1/2" spring fuller to make fullers at what will be the base of the tangs as in #2. Leave a little more stock in the fullered area than finished size and be careful not to have cold shuts. Hot cut the tangs as in #3. After doing a few forks, most of the first three steps will be done in one heat. Next forge the handle to size as in #4. Put your post vice jaw radiuses in place as a good heat is taken on the tang portion of the fork. Put handle in vice. Open tangs with hot cut #5, then fuller #6 and finally hammer smooth #7. Finish tangs and fork on the anvil #8.

This is a quick smooth way to make cooking forks with no areas for food or dirt to collect. The initial tapering cuts forge time to 15-20 minutes. Handle of your choice is extra.

