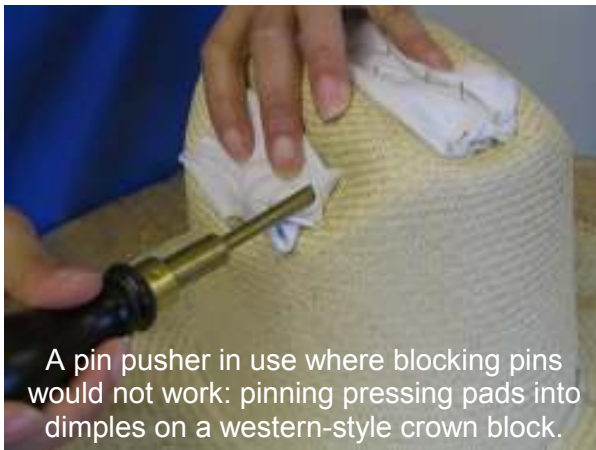


Pin Pushers

A very useful millinery tool!

Pin Pushers (technically *pin pushes*), are ingenious tools. If you have never used one, you might be forgiven for thinking that you don't need one, especially if you have a supply of our blocking pins! However, the lowly pin pusher has a place among the astute milliner's tools, and is in fact indispensable in some blocking situations.

The pin pusher's wooden handle fits comfortably into the hand and the metal tube into which the dressmaker's pin is dropped, has a magnet at the bottom. This holds the pin inside so that it does not fall out whatever the angle of the tool. Dressmaker's pins are hard to press into wooden blocks by hand, and a thimble is awkward to use, as it easily slips off the pin head. A pin pusher gives the user extra mechanical power: the pin goes into the wood with ease and stays there.



A pin pusher in use where blocking pins would not work: pinning pressing pads into dimples on a western-style crown block.

This photo illustrates one of these occasions. You want to block a crown which has indentations in it. As you pull the wet hat fabric over the block to pin it in place, so you pull the fabric out of the indentations. How to get the fabric to remain in the form dictated by the block, while staying taut and wrinkle-free over the rest of the block?

We demonstrate the method, using a scrap of light coloured cotton fabric, some straight dressmaker's pins and—a pin pusher! Twist the scrap of fabric up until it fits neatly into the indentation. Press it into place, load the

pin pusher, and press a pin through the fabric twist and into the block. Don't push too hard, or you may find it

very difficult to remove the pin later. In fact a pair of flat nosed pliers makes pin removal easier anyway. Between uses, stand the tool, handle downwards, in a small container so that it is positioned ready for the next pin to be dropped in, and you can work one-handed. Continue to load and pin, until the fabric twist is firmly held in place. The pins are fine, so will not mark the hat fabric, which will be held close against the block. The areas under the fabric twists may take a little longer to dry, but by the time the rest of the crown is dry, the fabric twists can be removed and the newly exposed fabric allowed to dry thoroughly. Problem solved!

