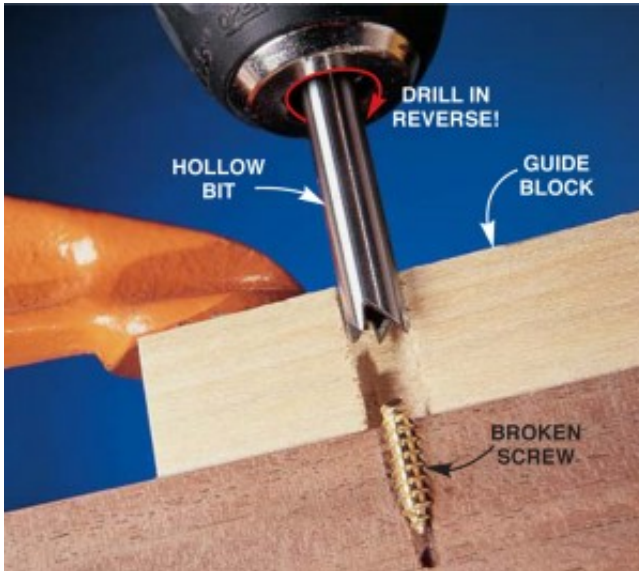


# Q & A: Are Broken Screws Removable?

By: AW Editors | January 20, 2015

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**Q:**

Argh! I broke off a brass screw while installing a small hinge. Can I get it out?

**A:**

Join the club! Every woodworker has faced this problem. The best answer is to drill around the screw with a hollow bit, an unusual device with reverse teeth.

Here's what you do: Buy a hollow bit with an inside diameter that's larger than the screw. Use a drill press to make a perpendicular hole in a piece of scrap that's

the outside diameter of the hollow bit. This guide block keeps the bit from wandering. Clamp the guide block over the broken screw. Then chuck the hollow bit in a portable drill set to "reverse." Drill around the screw. When you get near the bottom of the screw, it will unthread itself from the wood. (The hollow bit's teeth are backward so they cut when the drill is in reverse.) Sounds too good to be true, but it really works! Plug the hole with a dowel.

Next time you use brass screws, drill a pilot hole first, then screw in a steel screw to thread the wood. Replace the steel screw with a brass one and lubricate it with a toilet wax ring or moist soap shavings.