

Southwest Louisiana Woodworkers Club September 2020

Bill Fey, President

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, Eltee Thibodeaux

Patrick LaPoint Treasurer

Daren Hood, John Marcon, Robin Richard

Mentoring Program - If you have a project, a problem in any woodworking area, these members have volunteered to help. Give them a call. Frank Tartarmella 802-8989; John Marcon: 478-0646; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Ray Kebodeaux: 583-2378. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

September Newsletter

So here we are, still nervous about COVID-19 and rebuilding our homes, picking up debris from the yard and cleaning out the refrigerator and freezer. No electrical power as well (my spouse said "My kingdom for a vacume cleaner!") , poor cell service, no Internet and on and on.

But we will get over this, just as we did for Rita. In fact, there are some city services we didn't have after Rita such as spoiled food drop-offs.

The only benefit I have seen with all of the destruction is a plentiful supply of freshly downed oak, maple, walnut and more. Sadly, I lost a magnificent oak, most of which fell into my home. Except for the rain gutter, my shop made it through the storm without any damage. We had four picture windows destroyed by logs going through them and one log went through the roof, hit a brick wall on the inside, punching a hole through and out a side wall with a brick, part of which went into our large screen TV. So, no cable for a while.

Linda and I are living in Houston with friends and we may move to our home in Austin that we purchased in July, while the house is being repaired as the LC home is not livable at the moment.

We hope and pray that all of our members fared well. We certainly saw homes that appeared to have no damage in the Hyed Park area, but some were devastated.

Reach out to each other for help and advise as we recover from Hurricane Laura.

Budget Sharpening Woodworking Tools

Wood may seem like a soft, weak material if you're used to working with steel, but to do good work, you'll quickly learn you need your tools sharp. Buying and maintaining a good set of tools can be expensive for the home gamer, so [shopbuilt] put together an Instructable on how to sharpen your woodworking tools on a budget.

The trick is to use sandpaper. It's a good quality abrasive material and is readily available. You'll want a selection of different grits – low grits to get started, higher grits when finishing. The reason this is cheaper is that you can get a selection of 5-10 different sandpapers for under \$20. Get-

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The use of a tempered glass panel from a fridge shelf is, in our mind, an inspired choice here.

For the best sharpening using sandpaper, use automotive finishing paper over a flat peice of glass. You can attach the paper with a squirt of spray adhesive, so you can easily remove a lower grit and replace it with a higher as you move up the grits. I have found using a sharpening guide (available at Lee vally, Rockler, peachtree, etc.) works very well and provide both standard angles and micro-bevels in one tool.

Of course there are many other sharpening techniques such as the Tormex and others designed to establish the correct bevel angle without much work -- just expense. But once the bevel is established, I go back to the sandpaper because it is quick and cheap. Barry Humphus.

Woodworking Basics for the Wood Hacker

Far be it from me to pass judgment on anyone else's efforts – I can think of dozens of woodworking projects I've undertaken that were prosecutable as crimes against wood. But I do have a fair amount of experience with woodwork, having been in my dad's shop and making sawdust from the time I could hold a handsaw. I've picked up a few things over the decades, and I thought I'd share a few tips that might help you combine your hacks with woodwork that'll make your project shine. I'll gear this mainly to the novice woodworker, but there may be a few tips in here for the more experienced types as well.

One of the big problems with wood as a material is the perception that you need a lot of specialized tools to

Woodworking Hacks continues

work effectively with it. While having a table saw is great, it also causes problems. A good saw is expensive, requires a lot of room, is noisy and dusty, and given the fact that a wrong move can sever an appendage, they're intimidating to use. But there really is no substitute for the table saw for dimensioning rough stock, particularly when you need to perform a rip cut with the long grain of the wood. What are you to do?

One of the big problems with wood as a material is the perception that you need a lot of specialized tools to work effectively with it. While having a table saw is great, it also causes problems. A good saw is expensive, requires a lot of room, is noisy and dusty, and given the fact that a wrong move can sever an appendage, they're intimidating to use. But there really is no substitute for the table saw for dimensioning rough stock, particularly when you need to perform a rip cut with the long grain of the wood. What to do?

There are a few ways to deal with this, particularly these days. The first is to avoid the issue altogether by taking advantage of pre-cut material. Most home centers have a decent selection of wood in a number of species, all available in multiple thicknesses and nominal widths from 2" to 12" (sorry, metric world — I'll stick with imperial measurements because I have no idea how wood is measured in your shop). You may have to compromise or change your design a bit to use off-the-rack stock, but there are few projects where you can't hide a 1/2" difference in width. I would use this strategy even when I had a table saw — just lazy, I guess.

So casual woodworkers might want to look at entry level miter saws for their cross-cutting needs. Harbor Freight gets a bad rap on its offerings, but at \$89 for a 10" compound miter saw, it's hard to pass up even for a one-time job. Granted, a tool such as this is built to a price point and is not designed to survive the rigors of everyday job site use, but you're not asking it to do that.

A miter saw is a game-changer for lots of small projects. Being able to cut wood to precise angles is the first step to all sorts of projects — it elevates your build beyond the simple butt joints that, while often functional, lack the visual appeal of a well-executed miter. A cheap miter saw might fight you a little there with some slop in the hard stops at 45°, but most can be adjusted for a perfect joint.

Once you've got your stock cut perfectly, how do you put the pieces together? This is where a lot of novice woodworkers trip up, and a few simple tools and techniques can get you past this problem. But first, you need to look at

the forces the joint is going to experience in service. Many joints have almost no force on them. Picture frames are a good example — they just hang on the wall or sit on a desk. So just gluing the pieces together might be enough. But put that same miter joint into a box that needs to open and close a dozen times a day and a glued joint will fall apart in short order without some reinforcement.

There are tons of ways to reinforce a joint, starting with how the joint is cut in the first place. But if we're not talking about fancy stuff like dovetails or mortise and tenon joinery, we're probably going to need some sort of hardware to pull our joints together. That means brads, nails, or better still, screws.

For my money, the best investment the novice woodworker can make is a good pocket hole kit. Many SWLaWW use them for projects and they are great. Pocket hole joinery is another game changer. A jig clamps to the workpiece and allows you to drill a steeply angled hole at the edge of the wood, usually using a special stepped drill bit. The pocket guides a screw through one piece of stock into the other, with the depth of the hole and length of the screw carefully selected to avoid punching through.

Fine joinery? Perhaps you may need this, but not by a long shot. Strong, fast, easy, and cheap. You bet. I've thrown together simple butt-jointed frames and sturdy cases with pocket screws in a matter of minutes. Miters are no problem either, and the instruction book that comes with most kits shows you all the wonderful things you can build. You have to be a little careful about hiding the pocket hole, or you can plug it afterward if you like. I just used pocket hole joinery to put a reinforcing edge band on some simple shelves for my new shop/office. Took me a few minutes (outside during a snowstorm) and it's as good as it needs to be for the job it'll do.

I've got a Kreg Jig K4 Master System which has served me well for years. At \$150 retail it isn't cheap, but the value is definitely there. If you want to start small, you can buy a simple kit with just a small jig, the stepped drill bit, and a square-head driver bit for the pocket screws for about \$40. Fair warning, though: you'll need a Vise-Grip face clamp to use the jig effectively.

Novice woodworkers, especially those used to working with less compliant materials common in the machine shop, are often frustrated when they try to put holes in wood. Choose the wrong bit or use the wrong technique, and holes can end up looking pretty bad.

The best choice for blind holes either, but you can get away with it if you're careful. You'll get better results
Woodworking Hack continues

using twist drills specifically designed for wood; these usually have a brad point in the center and spurs on the outside diameter; the brad point helps to keep the bit on target and the spurs cut the wood fibers cleanly for a smoother bore.

Larger diameter holes are best drilled with a spade bit. These also have brad points and spurs, but the cutting surface is flat and paddle-shaped, and the cutting method is more of a scraping action. A beefed up version of the spade bit, the Forstner bit, works in much the same way but can be used to drill angled holes; a spade bit has a fairly limited angle of acceptance to the stock before the flat blade starts boring.

Except for the pilot hole drilled by the brad point, spade and Forstner bits can drill nearly flat-bottomed holes. But the pilot hole can be used to advantage when counterboring holes. This is especially useful for mounting switches, pots, and pilot lights in wood panels; the threaded shafts of such parts are rarely long enough to clear even a thin piece of stock. A large diameter bit is used to hog out enough space on the inside of the panel to clear the back of a control, while a clearance hole for the shaft is drilled through the first bit's pilot. A drill press is best for such operations.

And one final drilling pro-tip: no matter what bit you use, always back up through-holes with a piece of waste wood, and clamp your stock to the waste block firmly. You won't believe the difference that simple trick makes – holes will come out clean with no punch through to ruin your work.

I hope this encourages you to include wood in your projects. Good results only take a few basic tools, a little practice, and some guidance. And remember that all three of those and more are probably available at your local hackerspace. It might be worth a visit to see what folks are doing with wood and get some ideas. Barry Humphus.

Removing Wood Blemishes

If you've done any woodworking in the past, odds are likely that you'll eventually end up fixturing your stock in the crushing grip of a vise or C-Clamp. The results are painful, leaving a lasting impression of the clamp jaws on your beautiful, otherwise-unmarred piece of stock. Often, you'll need to design around this issue, fixture it gently, or cushion the grip with a softer intermediate material. [Chimponabike] had other thoughts, though, and developed a technique for successfully popping the dimples out, returning clamped wood to its perfectly unmarred form.

The Technique itself is dead simple and takes only a few minutes to perform. Simply apply a small amount of water, let it seep into the wood, and then bring a hot iron down onto the soaked wood to evaporate off the soaked water—instant

It's not the first time we've abused our tools and home appliances to do some clever things with wood, but it's certainly worth adding to that "Tome of Techniques: Wood Edition" that you've been building in your browser's bookmarks bar. Barry Humphus.

A Final Note this Month

The SWLaWW club is an organization that has been in existence for for more than 25 years in the Lake Area. We want and must continue this endeavor as possible to make certain that area woodworkers learn, teach and be responsive to the needs of woodworkers across our region.

There have been several changes to our organization over the past year including new and vibrant leadership in President Bill Fey, who has changed our focus in a better way.

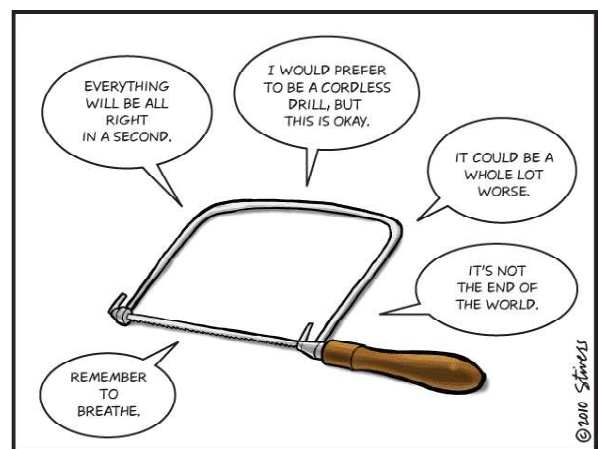
At the moment, all of us are going through a very stressful time with the COVID virus and now Hurricane Laura. We have done this before as an organization. For the long term, we will likely do this again in the future.

Let us stay together, be safe in what we do and make certain that our wonderful Southwest Louisiana Woodworkers Club stays strong and vibrant for the future.

Please feel free to contact Bill Fey, Patrick LaPoint, or Barry Humphus with your thoughts and ideas about what we should do as an organization. Each of us welcome your ideas about our organization. Please do not be shy about this. We need your input and help with keeping this organization going strong for the future.

We are an organization that has been going for more than 25 years. Let us step up in this time of stress and need to continue what we do as woodworkers, make the community aware of your interest and skills and the knowledge you bring to our community.

Barry Humphus. See you soon.



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September Meeting Location

While we do not have a meeting this month, please consider your shop some time in the future. Clearly, the COVID-19 virus has restricted our meetings for a while and then we got the Laura Hurricane that has damaged our homes to a great extent for many of us on top of that.

No meetings until further notice.

Please stay safe and as you clean the debris from your homes, please be particularly safe doing the cleaning and debris removal.

Best of luck and be so very safe.



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