

## TIPS + TRICKS

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### Choosing Tools

#### SAWS

The most versatile and affordable saw is a circular saw with a combination blade. Beginners will appreciate using just one blade for both ripping and cross cutting.

Jig saws (aka saber saws) cut in an up-and-down motion and offer much more control. Use a jig saw for making complex cuts or more intricate designs.

#### HAMMERS

Small nails are easier to drive with a shorter, lighter hammer (8-16 oz.) with a small, flat head. A longer handle delivers more power, but it's harder to control. For more durability and comfort, we recommend a fiberglass or composite handle.

#### POWER DRILLS VS. SCREWDRIVERS

A cordless power drill and a screwdriver (manual, electric, or power) will all fasten a screw. But for predrilling holes *and* driving screws, pick a drill with either two speeds or a variable speed. High is for drilling, low is for screwing.



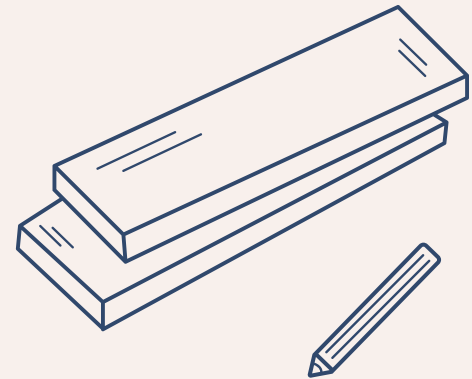
# Woodworking Tips

## SAWING

As they say, measure twice, cut once.

For the cleanest cut, consider these tips:

- Use a new, fine-tooth, 80-tooth or more, carbide, combination sawblade.
- Score your cutline first using a straight edge and a sharp blade, like a utility knife or razor blade. (The cutline is the line the sawblade will travel.) When measuring, add the width of the sawblade to your mark.
- Give extra support to the wood fibers along the cutline by running a piece of painters' tape over it.
- If an extra-clean cut is important, securely clamp a second, thin piece of scrap wood to the bottom of the piece you're cutting.
- Frayed edges can be easily cleaned up with some quick sanding. A badly chewed edge can be repaired with wood filler or woody putty as needed.



## SANDING

- A smooth, ready-to-finish surface is accomplished using a series of increasingly finer grit sandpapers. Start with medium-fine grit like #120, progress to #150, and end with #180. Note that skipping a grit can leave scratches too deep for the next grit to remove.
- Sand evenly and in the direction of the grain.
- Don't oversand – you could potentially seal the wood so tightly it won't absorb finish.
- Be careful if using an electric sander (palm or orbital) on veneer faces. They're easy to accidentally sand through with too much power.
- Wipe wood with a damp cloth to remove dust after sanding.
- Don't sand wood fiber panels (MDF, particleboard, hardboard). These wood products already have smooth surfaces, but when sanded, they also create a tremendous amount of very fine sawdust that can irritate eyes and lungs.



# Fastening Tips

## DRILLING

Predrilling screw holes is always recommended. It helps prevent splitting, gaps, and fastening at an off angle.

- For the strongest, longest-lasting hold, predrill holes slightly smaller than the screws you're using.
- When you need to avoid drilling all the way through a piece of wood, wrap a piece of tape around the drill bit to mark the depth you want to stop and reverse out.

## SCREWING

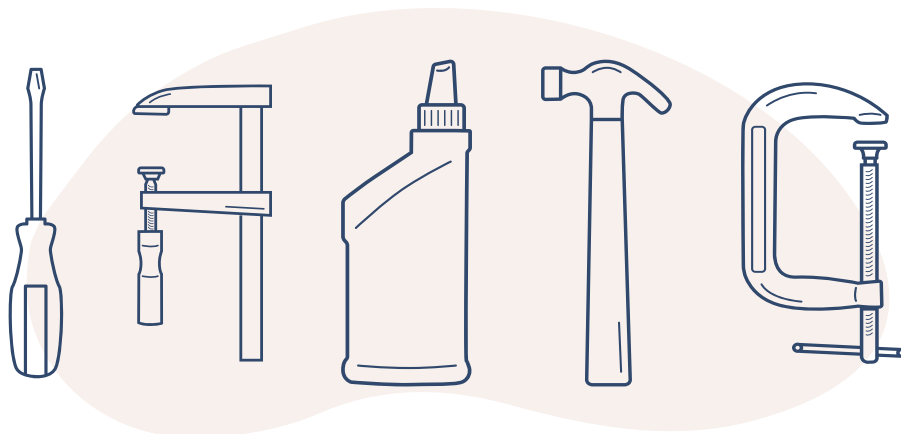
- To avoid slipping off, stripping the screw, etc., hold both the screw and the drill as vertically straight as possible and pull the trigger with slow, even pressure.
- Use flathead wood screws if you want the head flush with the surface of the wood.
- Avoid fastening into knots.

## GLUING

- Use wood glue – also called polyurethane glue – not white school glue or a glue gun.
- Before applying glue, wipe wood with a damp cloth to remove any dust or particles that could prevent a tight bond.
- After applying glue, clamp pieces together and allow to dry for at least 30–60 minutes. Dry for 24 hours if there will be any stress on the joint.

## NAILING

- To lessen the chance of accidentally splitting your wood, choose the thinnest nails possible that will still provide adequate holding power.
- Avoid nailing into the end grain, especially with oversized nails.
- Predrilling is usually unnecessary when nailing unless you're using hardwood, very thin material, or you need to nail close to the end grain.



# Finishing Tips

## PLYWOOD EDGES

- Wood filler or wood putty is perfect for the occasional void commonly found in any plywood. Be sure to follow manufacturer's instructions for use.
- If you want to hide the plies on the edges of your plywood, apply edge banding (available in a variety of widths and colors/species), or cover with a thin strip of natural, solid wood.

## PAINT

- For the cleanest results, paint each piece of wood after cutting, drilling, sanding, and wiping down, but before assembling your project.
- A base coat/primer will allow for better paint coverage and less spots where the grain shows through.
- A clear topcoat of any water-based polycrylic adds a protective finish and/or your desired level of glossiness.

## STAIN

- For more even coverage, use a pre-stain.
- Apply stain using old rags or towels, or choose a brush made specifically for stain.
- End-grains (areas where the wood has been cut against the grain) tend to soak up more stain than other areas. Give end-grains an extra sanding to tighten the pores and lessen the overabsorption.
- The finer the grit of the final sandpaper you use, the lighter the stain color will be. The coarser the sandpaper, the darker the color will be.
- Don't stain wood fiber panels (MDF, particle-board, hardboard). These panels are susceptible to moisture and expand when wet. Additionally, without a natural woodgrain, they fail to absorb stain evenly.

