

## How to Make and use a Shooting Board

If most of your woodworking is done without machinery the shooting board is essential for truing up the cut end of pieces. It is also excellent for planing a true edge on very thin boards or veneer to aid jointing.

The length of the board depends on what you will be using it for. I have a 1.8 metre board I use for veneer jointing, a general purpose board need not be much more than 800mm long. The one shown is about that long. The base board is 18mm MDF 240mm wide by 800mm long. The top board is 9mm MDF 160mm by 750 mm long.

It is important that the edge of the top board is straight and true and that ends are absolutely square with the true edge. Drill and screw the top board to the base board, ensure all screws are well countersunk. There should be a 50mm gap at the end of the top board and an 80mm margin down one side. If you are right handed the gap should be at the top with the margin on the right, if left handed the gap will be at the top with the margin on the left.

Make up the end stock that will be fitted at the end of the top board. Mine was 44mm by 35mm by 160mm in elm, it should be a hardwood. Fit this butting up to the end of the top board (44mm dimension vertical) by screwing up from below, pilot drill the holes into the stock. Glue (PVA) and screw the stock into position, check that it is absolutely square before leaving it for the glue to dry. This should leave you with a stock that is square at the end and square with the line of the top board



Screw a block to the underneath of the other end of the board, this is to act as a hook against the edge of the bench to aid stability in use.



This is the way to make a basic shooting board, some woodworkers like to go to town making boards with all sorts of special features. I like to keep it simple, this shooting board does the job.

How do you use it? Place the piece to be trued onto the board with the face side against the stock. Run the plane in the rebate created between the top and base board. You should be applying diagonal pressure into the corner of the rebate so the sole runs against the edge of the top board and the side of the plane stays flat on the base board. I find it easier to hold the plane in the centre, there is a nicely shaped part of the frog that fits the thumb well. Apply slight pressure to the work piece so it is pressed against the sole of the plane but not forcing it away from the top board. Run the plane up and down the rebate but try not to pull it back too far else the work piece will slide forward and be hit by the plane.



To true up veneer. Tap the veneer leaves down so the edges are aligned and lay them on the top board so they are protruding by about 2mm. Lay a board on top with a weight on top to compress the veneers (others use a clamping system, but I find this works OK). Run the plane along the veneer edge using only light pressure until the edges are smooth and true.

