



# WOOD ACADEMY

## Whispers of Craft: Handcrafted Wooden Boxes in the Silent Embrace of the Night



Creating wooden boxes using only hand tools can be a deeply fulfilling and rewarding experience that transcends the mere act of crafting.

The tactile connection between the artisan and the wood, the rhythmic sound of chisels and saws, and the intimate knowledge of each handcrafted joint bring a sense of mindfulness and satisfaction. The process becomes a meditation, allowing the creator to immerse themselves in the craft, focusing on the details and the journey rather than just the end result.

One distinct advantage of crafting wooden boxes exclusively with hand tools is the silent symphony of creation that unfolds.

Without the intrusive hum of power tools, the process becomes a quiet dance between the artisan and the material. This not only enhances the overall experience but also allows the craftsman to work in the tranquility of the night without disrupting the household.

The ability to shape, assemble, and refine these boxes in the peaceful hours of darkness adds a layer of magic to the creation, transforming it into a personal and almost secret endeavor.

As the night unfolds, the craftsman can lose themselves in the creative process, surrounded only by the soft glow of ambient light.

The absence of power tool noise allows for a connection not just with the wood but also with the stillness of the night, creating an environment conducive to focus and unhurried craftsmanship.

This solitary endeavor in the quiet hours can be a source of solace and satisfaction, as the maker experiences a unique communion with both the material and the craft, making each handcrafted wooden box a testament to patience, skill, and the joy of creating in the hushed intimacy of the night.

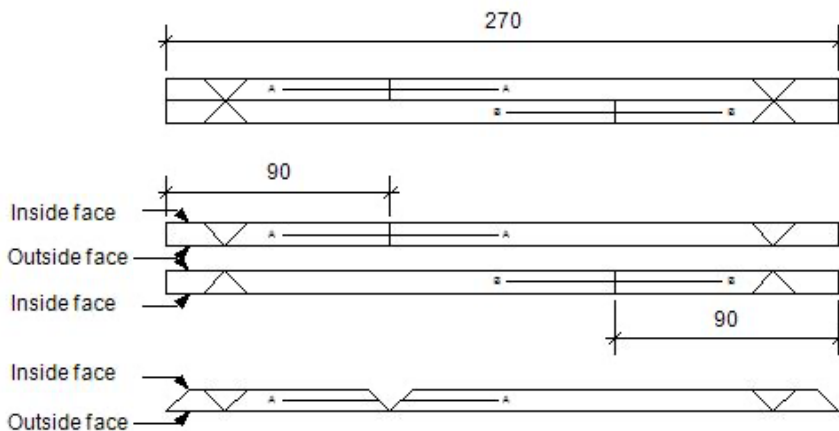


# WOOD ACADEMY

## 1. Preparing the Timber

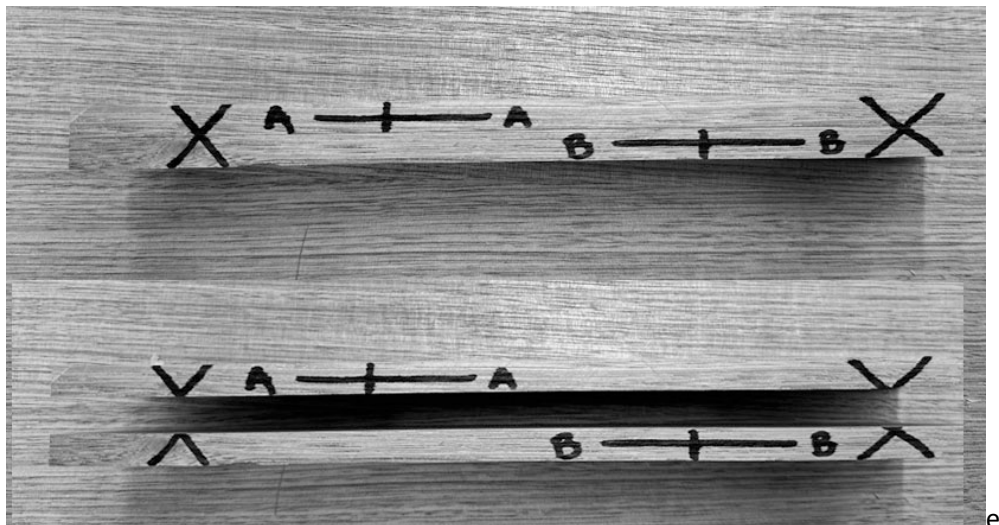
Start with a piece of 270mm x 70mm x 25mm board (preferably quartersawn) and mark a centre line along the edge. Cut the board down the centre line with a bandsaw.

With a marker or pencil mark the timber as shown.



## 2. Marking of the Blank

The Xs on the ripped board will show the inside and outside of the box. The lines of the X cross (point of the “mountains”) will be the outside face of the box, where the open end of the X is will be the inside face of the box. You can also see in diagram above I have marked the sides A and B. They will help with realignment later in the gluing stage





# WOOD ACADEMY

## 3. Cutting the box sides to length

Using a saw (either Japanese pull saw or European Tenon saw), cut the side marked for cutting (80mm in from the edge).



## 4. Cutting the Mitres on the box sides

Tools required – Miter Shooting board and sharp plane (either block plane or smoothing plane).

Using a Miter shooting board and a sharp plane, cut the mitres on both ends of the box sides with the mountain facing down (see diagram).

Cut all 8 joints. It is important that opposite side of the box sides are exactly the same length. This can be done by putting them back to back and comparing the lengths.



# WOOD ACADEMY





# WOOD ACADEMY

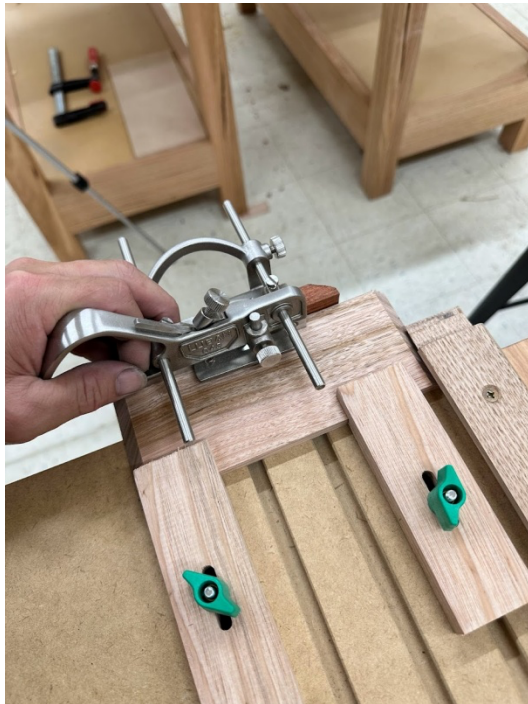
## 5. Cut the trench on the box sides.

Tools required – Clamping board and plow plane

Place the clamping board into the vice on the bench and secure in place. Clamp the box side to the clamping board with the marking on the left hand side with the mountain facing down (inside of the box facing up).

Using a plow plane, make a trench that is about 5mm from the edge and about 5mm deep. Be slow and deliberate with the plane, listen to the soft, rhythmic shushing sound as the sharp blade cutting the wood fibers, creating a gentle friction that speaks to the precision of the tool rather than rushing and forcing through fast brutal pushes.

Repeat for the other 3 box sides.





# WOOD ACADEMY

## 6. Cut the Rebate on the other side

Again clamp the box side to the clamping board with the mountain facing down (inside of the box facing up) but this time with the marking on the right hand side.

Using a rebate plane, make a rebate that is about 5mm from the edge and 5mm deep.



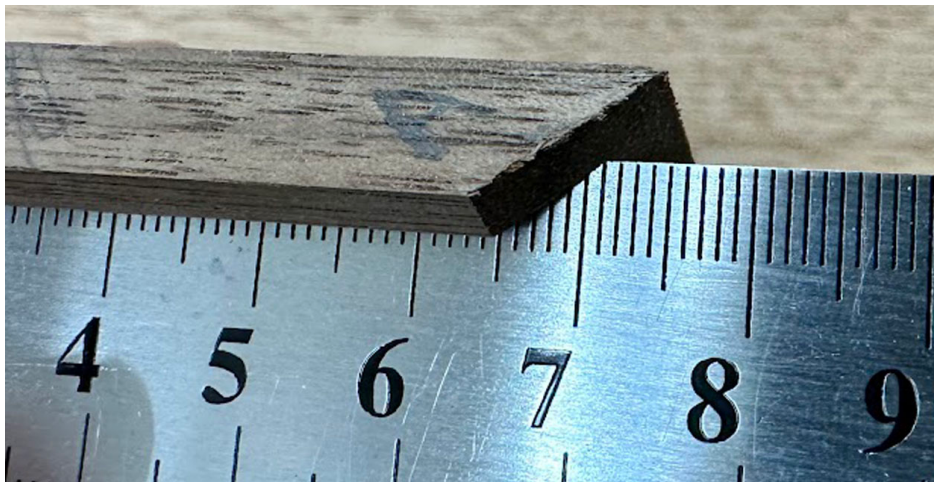


# WOOD ACADEMY

## 7. Cut Your Base to Size.

Using a steel rule, measure the inside length of the trench on both the long and short box sides. In this instance, the rule shows 71mm (see photo below).

With both the long and short trench lengths, subtract 2mm from the measured lengths, so for example the 71mm, we will cut the box base to 69mm. This is to allow wood movement so that the box will float within the box sides.





# WOOD ACADEMY

## 8. Sand the inside of the box

With a cork block and 120, 180, and 240 grit sandpaper, carefully sand the inside of the box and the box base.

Pay special attention not to round over the mitre join.

Test fit the box base to ensure that the base will easily slide in and out of the trench. Too tight a fit may lead to the trench breaking.

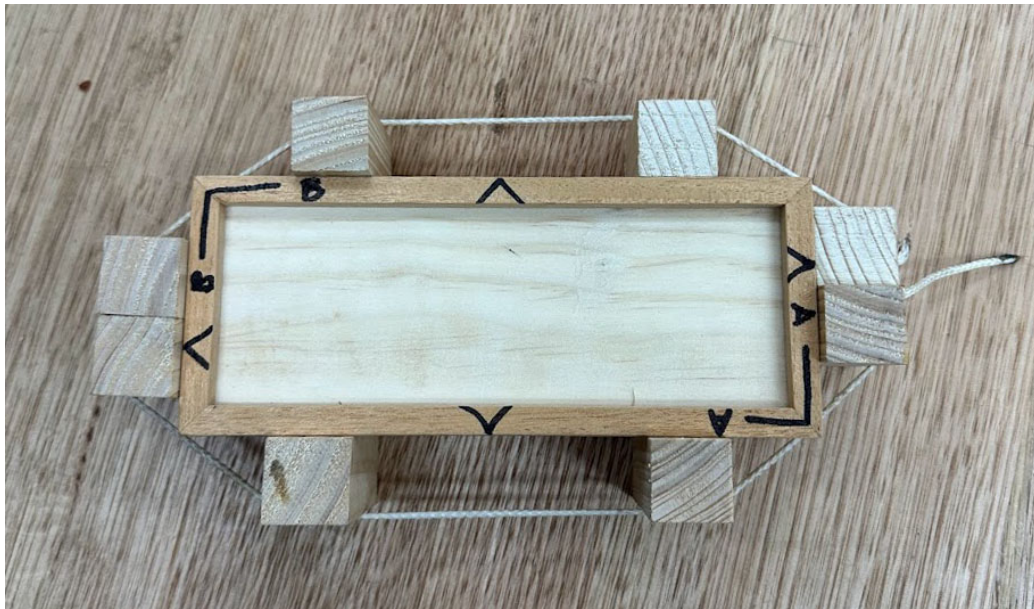
## 9. Dry fit and clamp.

Put together the box side with the box base in place. Pay special attention so that the two letter are pointing to each other.

Assemble Using a string tied into a loop that tied to slightly larger than the box.

Using 6 or 8 block stretch the loop taught – this will be the clamping pressure to hold the joints in place while the glue dries.

Again – be careful not to push too hard if the box base will not slide in and out of the trench easily. Too much pressure may break the joint.







# WOOD ACADEMY

## 10. Apply Glue to the joint

Once your happy with the fit of box, take off the clamps and apply glue to the mitre joints. It is important to try to avoid glue squeeze out into the inside of the box.

To prevent squeeze out on the inside, only apply glue on the outside two thirds of the joint with a brush.

There is no need to put glue into the trench to hold the bottom of the box in place. The bottom of the box should be captured in place from the box sides.





# WOOD ACADEMY

## 11. Veneer Splines

After the glue has dried, its time is reinforce the mitre joint with a mechanical key.

We use a commercial veneer leaf as the key with is roughly 0.6mm thick. To cut the slot to hold the key we use a traditional Europeans Tenon or Dovetail saw. Japanese pull saws have too fine a kerf for a commercial veneer to fit.

With a pencil mark 15mm in from both corners and 15mm from the top and bottom.



Using the saw, saw down to the marks. Hold your box using the vice on your workbench with the box sitting at a 45 degree angle.



# WOOD ACADEMY



Cut commercial veneer stock into little triangles roughly 25mm x 25mm. You will need a minimum of 8 of these triangles, but I usually cut a couple more incase i break some during the gluing process. Its also good practice to use veneer that is a contrasting color the box side.



Squeeze glue into the joint and with a brush, coat both surfaces of the triangle with glue. Slide the veneer keys into the slot and position into place. Put aside and allow to dry preferably overnight.



# WOOD ACADEMY



Once dried, with a sharp chisel, pare away the excess veneer from the box. Clamp the box using your workbench vice and pare from the corner into the centre of the box side so that you have supported grain to prevent tear out.





# WOOD ACADEMY

## 12. Lid

Measure the opening of the box which will hold the lid in place. Select a lid stock, mark out the outline of the lid and cut oversize with a Tenon saw or Japanese saw. Once cut, using a hand plane and shooting board, size the lid down to the pencil lines.

Mark down 4mm on both the top and side of the lid with a pencil. Using a hand plane, put a chamfer on the top side of the lid. Remember to start with the end grain sides of the lid before working on the long grain side of the lid.



## 13. Handle.

Draw two line from corner to opposite corner to find the center of the lid.

With a 3mm or 2.5mm drill bit (measure the diameter of the dowel first before you drill the hole) drill down 7mm into the lid. Be mindful not to drill through the lid.

Select the handle you want to use and drill the same hole into the handle.

Do not glue the handle onto the lid until you have finished sanding both the lid and handle.



# WOOD ACADEMY

## **14. Sand the outside of the box.**

Sand the outside of the box, the lid and the handle to 240 grit or finer sandpaper.

## **15. Glue handle onto lid**

With a dowel cut to size, apply glue onto the lid and the handle and glue into place.

## **16. Apply Finish**

Apply your choice of finish.