

# WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL

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## Classic Project

### In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings and related photos.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

## Folding Deck Table

GIFT SHOP Easy-To-Make Gift Projects

### folding DECK TABLE



The design of this deck table is based on an idea that's been used for everything from stools to small tables. As a side table for your barbecue grill, an extra serving table in the dining room, or in some other capacity, this little fold-away table will find many uses.

But beyond its functional side this table is fun to build. The way the table collapses will probably have you setting it up and breaking it down just to see how cleverly everything nests together.

All the board stock for the table is  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick. Our table was constructed of ash, but almost any hardwood can be used. If you like knowing just how much



material is needed before you start a project, check our cutting diagram. As shown, all the wood parts except the dowel stock can be cut from a  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick by 8 in. wide by 9 ft. long board. Make an initial rip cut as shown, then rip and crosscut to separate the parts. The 9 ft. length only includes an allowance of  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. for each of the four crosscuts, so you'll need to be accurate if you want to get all your parts from a board this long. Don't worry if you've lost a little length after sanding; it won't make any difference come assembly.

The top consists of four slats (A) and two half slats (B). The slats mount to the cleats (C), which are then attached to the legs (D). The four cleats are identical, as are the four legs, but when the table is assembled one set of legs and cleats is assembled so it fits inboard of the other set. This is the secret to the table folding flat.

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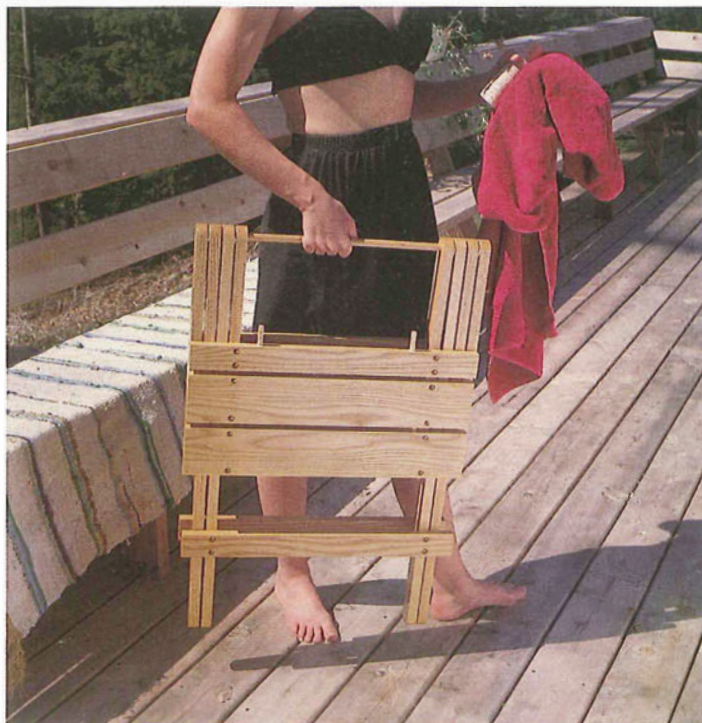


# *folding* DECK TABLE

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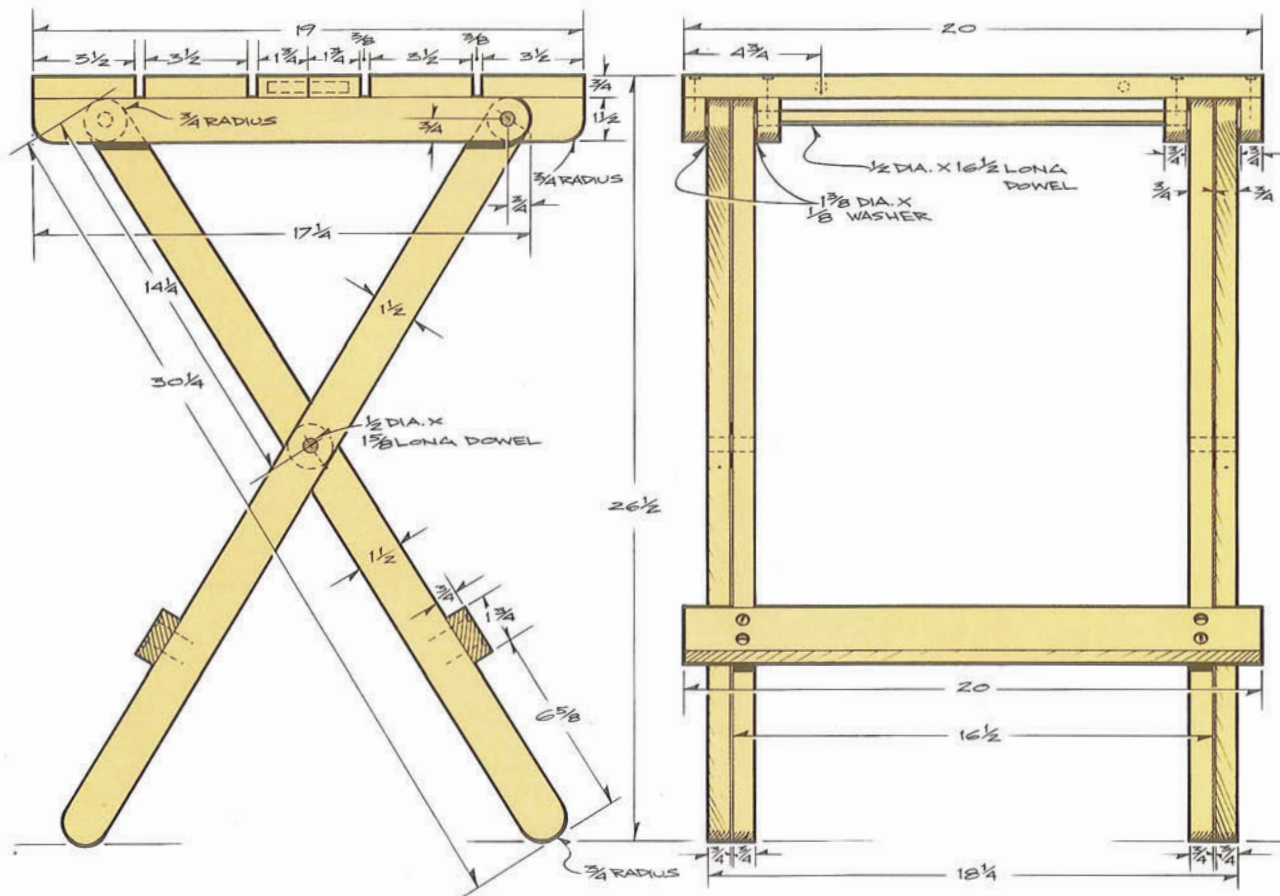
All the board stock for the table is  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. thick. Our table was constructed of ash, but almost any hardwood can be used. If you like knowing just how much



material is needed before you start a project, check our cutting diagram. As shown, all the wood parts except the dowel stock can be cut from a  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. thick by 8 in. wide by 9 ft. long board. Make an initial rip cut as shown, then rip and crosscut to separate the parts. The 9 ft. length only includes an allowance of  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. for each of the four crosscuts, so you'll need to be accurate if you want to get all your parts from a board this long. Don't worry if you've lost a little length after sanding; it won't make any difference come assembly.

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The most important part of the table construction is the layout of the various dowel holes. Make sure that the 1/2 in. diameter dowel holes at the ends of the cleats are located 3/4 in. on center and 3/4 in. from the end. Use a drill press if you have one and set up a jig to speed the work and insure accuracy. Note the location of the dowel holes at the point the legs cross, 14 1/4 in. from the top end. After the dowel holes have been drilled, round both ends of the legs, the dowel end of the cleats, and the lower corner on the opposite end of the cleats. A disk sander comes in handy for this rounding, but rasps and files will also make short work of this task. Just scribe pencil lines to serve as your guide for the 3/4 in. radii.

The best way to get everything properly located during assembly is to start at the outside and work in. The dimensions on our front elevation allow 1/8 in. for each washer separating the sections, which works out just right if you buy the 1/8 in. thick washers we used. The 1 3/8 in. diameter washers are a little smaller than the stock width so they won't show at the edge.

Start by mounting two slats and one of the half slats to the two outer cleats.

Bill of Materials (all dimensions actual)			
Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Slat	3/4 x 3 1/2 x 20	4
B	Half Slat	3/4 x 1 3/4 x 20	2
C	Cleat	3/4 x 1 1/2 x 17 1/4	4
D	Leg	3/4 x 1 1/2 x 30 1/4	4
E	Stretcher	3/4 x 1 3/4 x 20	2
F	Handle	1/2 dia. x 16 1/2 long	1

Position the slats so the ends are flush with the outside edges of the cleats. Use ovalhead 1 1/2 in. long brass screws and countersink so the screw heads are slightly recessed. Now add the two outermost legs, with a washer at each joint between the cleats and legs. Use glue and a 1 1/4 in. long brad to anchor the pivot dowel and cleat connection, but be careful not to get any glue on the leg end of the dowel. The leg must be free to pivot. Then add the two inside legs, again with a washer between the adjoining parts. As shown, glue and reinforce the outside half of the joint with a brad, but leave the inside section free to pivot.

Now mount the remaining slats and

half slat to the two inside cleats and join that assembly to the rest of the table with the long dowel handle (F). Be sure to allow for the washers that will separate the cleats and legs when mounting the slats to the cleats. It's a good idea to just lay the parts in their correct orientation—as they would be with the table folded up—to check alignment. The washers provide much needed insurance against too tight a fit, but it's important to check everything to be sure. When you are certain the parts have proper clearance, screw the slats in place and then add the handle. Note that a brad and glue anchors the ends of the handle where it fits into the legs, but that the cleats must be allowed to pivot freely. Be careful not to make too tight a fit of the dowels through the parts that must pivot, or you'll find the joints binding in humid weather. One tip to insure smooth pivoting action and keep excess glue squeeze-out from affecting the joint is to wax the pivoting sections of the joints before assembly.

Mount the stretchers (E) with the table folded flat. That way you can be sure the leg position is accurate. Maintain the 1/8 in. washer space along the full length of




the legs in the nested position to prevent binding. Flip the table over to mount the other stretcher.

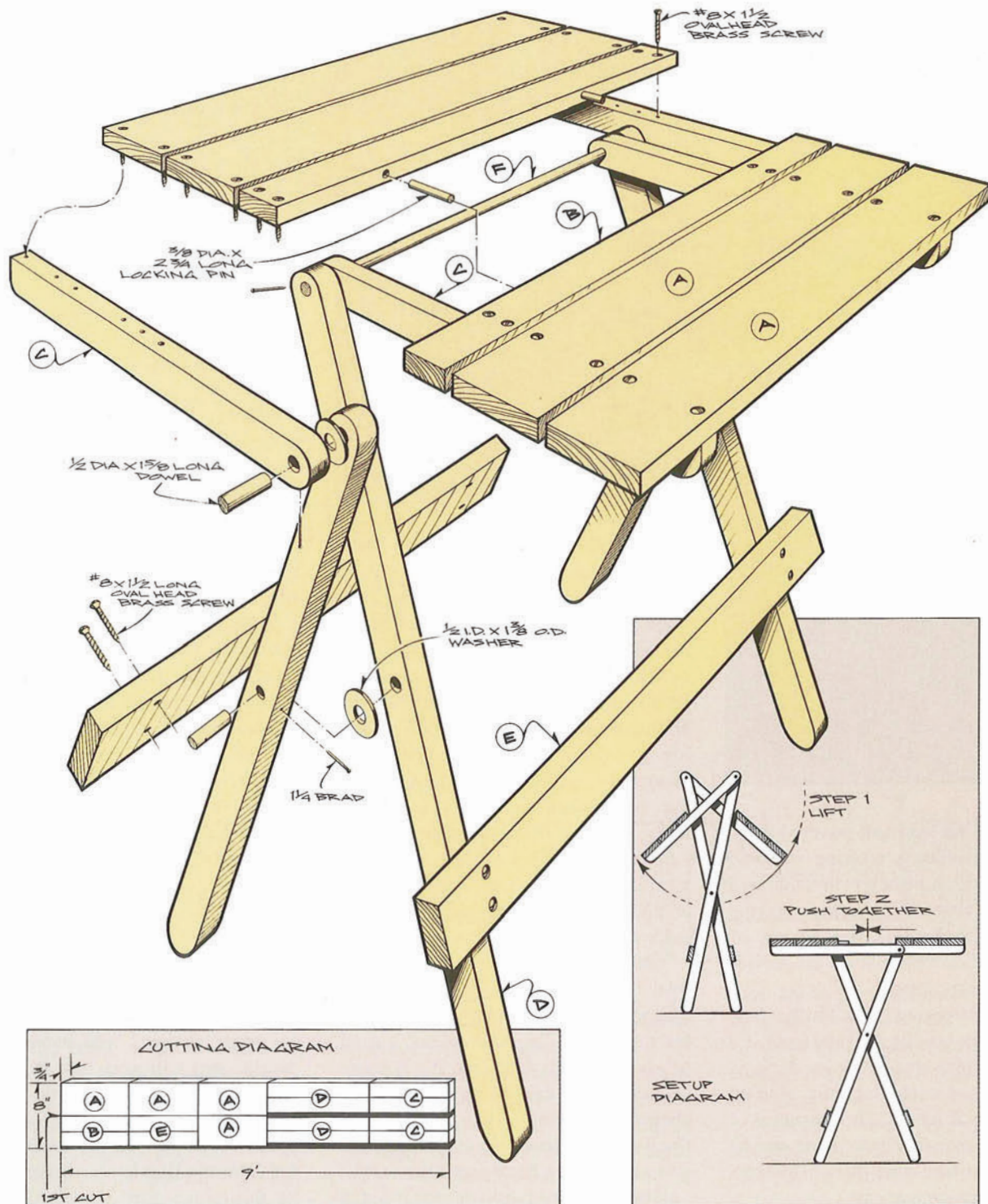
It's important that the locking pins be aligned. The easiest way to both drill the pin holes and get the alignment right is to open the table up, scribe index lines across the half cleats with a T-square,

then unscrew the cleats and use a drill press to establish the holes. Chamfer the inside edge of the holes with a counter-sink and taper the exposed ends of the pins to help ease their entry during setup.

To set up the table from the folded position (see Setup Diagram), lift the slat and cleat sections, then slide the two

sections together on a horizontal plane, scissoring open the legs. The locking pins anchor the table while in the open position.

We finished the table with three coats of spar varnish. Multiple light coats are always better than one or two heavy coats. Let each coat dry overnight. 



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Thank you again for your purchase, and happy woodworking!

Matt Becker  
Internet Production Coordinator