WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL

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Classic Project

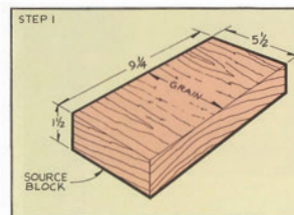### In this plan you'll find:

- 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.

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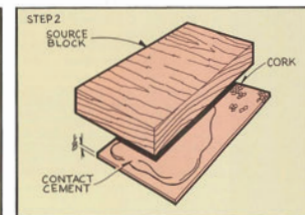
Shop-Built Sanding Blocks

Walter L. Rochette of Glendora, California designed these sanding blocks as a low-cost alternative to the store-bought variety. The step-by-step technique shown yields three separate blocks — one each for coarse, medium, and fine sandpaper. The blocks are designed to use either the cloth-backed paper from 3 in. wide belt sanders or 3 in. wide roll sandpaper, which is more flexible and longer lasting than standard sandpaper.

For each set of three blocks you'll need a piece of stock about 1½ in. thick by 9¼ in. wide by 5½ in. long. The extra width allows for the saw kerfs when you make the ripping cuts later to form the three blocks. If you don't have thick stock,

you can face-glue two ¾ in. thick pieces to get the 1½ in. thickness. We made our sanding blocks from pine, but almost any scrap will be fine. The ⅛ in. thick cork sheet that we glued to the bottom of the sanding block helps grip the cloth backing and extends the sandpaper's life. It also helps the block to conform to any slight unevenness of the work surface. We bought our cork at a local lumberyard, but if you can't find it locally, a similar ³⁄₁₆ in. thick cork can be ordered from Meisel Hardware Specialties, P.O. Box 70, Mound, Minnesota 55364. Order their part no. C31. Cost is $.70 for an 8½ in. by 11 in. sheet.

STEP 1

Step 1: Size your source block. Take note that the grain direction is oriented so the width is 9¼ in. and the length is 5½ in. This way the grain will be in the proper direction once the individual sanding blocks are cut from the source block.

STEP 2

Step 2: Glue the cork on with contact cement. Regular adhesives for woodworking don't have enough flex, and would result in the cork breaking apart as the sanding blocks are used.

The Woodworker's Journal
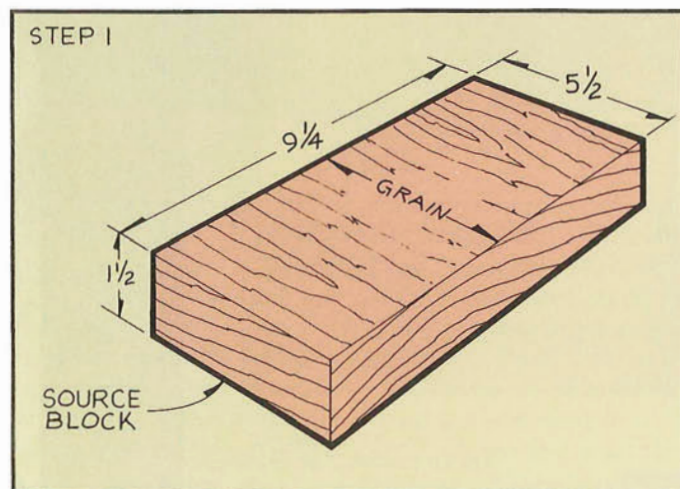
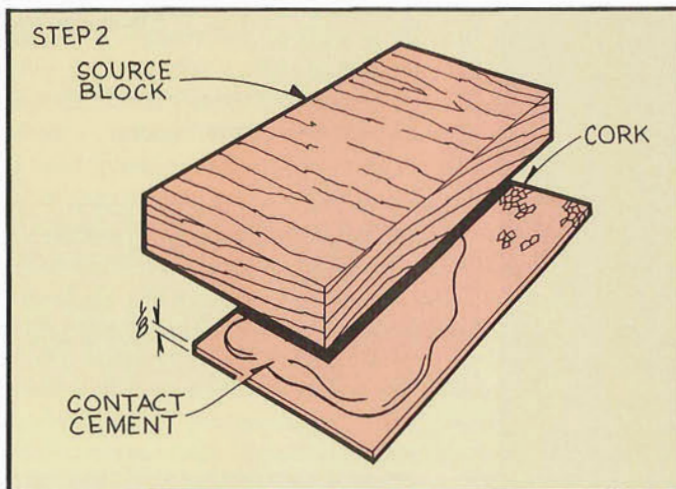Published in *Woodworker's Journal* July/August 1991

$1.00

Walter L. Rochette of Glendora, California designed these sanding blocks as a low-cost alternative to the store-bought variety. The step-by-step technique shown yields three separate blocks — one each for coarse, medium, and fine sandpaper. The blocks are designed to use either the cloth-backed paper from 3 in. wide belt sanders or 3 in. wide roll sandpaper, which is more flexible and longer lasting than standard sandpaper.

For each set of three blocks you'll need a piece of stock about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick by $9\frac{1}{4}$ in. wide by $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. long. The extra width allows for the saw kerfs when you make the ripping cuts later to form the three blocks. If you don't have thick stock,
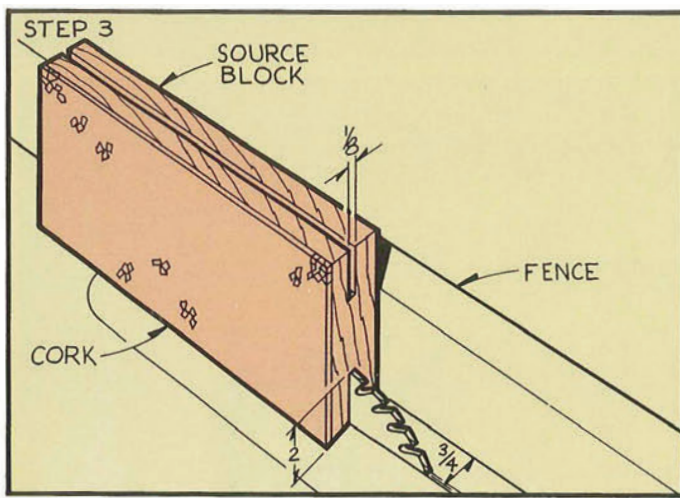
you can face-glue two $3/4$ in. thick pieces to get the $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. thickness. We made our sanding blocks from pine, but almost any scrap will be fine. The $1/8$ in. thick cork sheet that we glued to the bottom of the sanding block helps grip the cloth backing and extends the sandpaper's life. It also helps the block to conform to any slight unevenness of the work surface. We bought our cork at a local lumberyard, but if you can't find it locally, a similar $3/16$ in. thick cork can be ordered from Meisel Hardware Specialties, P.O. Box 70, Mound, Minnesota 55364. Order their part no. C31. Cost is $.70 for an $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 11 in. sheet.
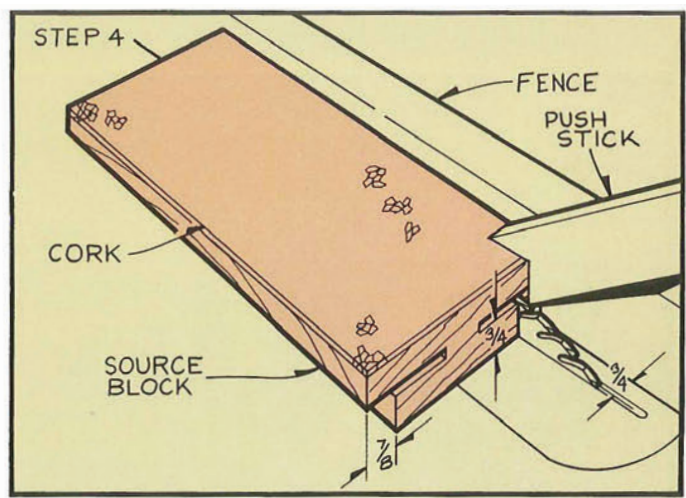

Shop-Built Sanding Blocks

STEP 1

SOURCE BLOCK

Step 1: Size your source block. Take note that the grain direction is oriented so the width is $9\frac{1}{4}$ in. and the length is $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. This way the grain will be in the proper direction once the individual sanding blocks are cut from the source block.

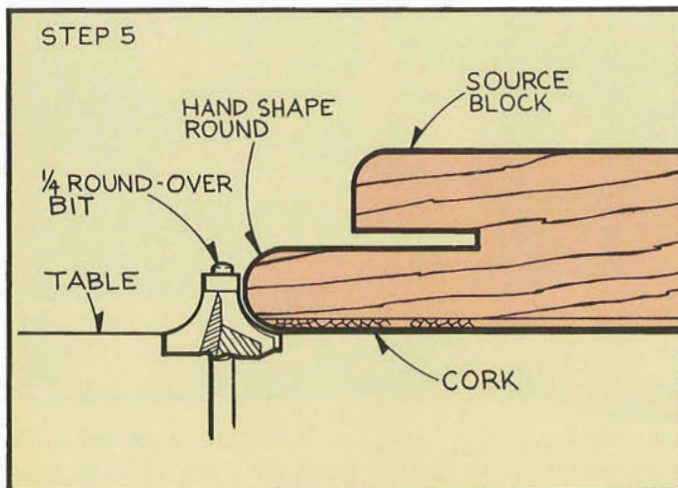STEP 2

SOURCE BLOCK

CORK

CONTACT CEMENT

Step 2: Glue the cork on with contact cement. Regular adhesives for woodworking don't have enough flex, and would result in the cork breaking apart as the sanding blocks are used.
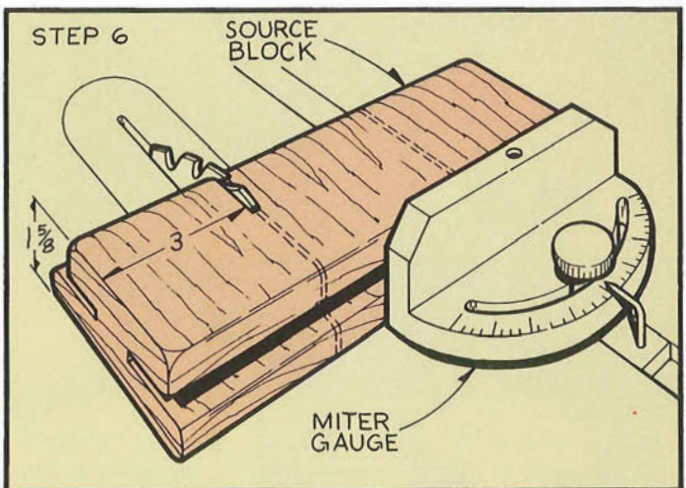
STEP 3

SOURCE BLOCK

FENCE

CORK

Step 3: Raise the blade on the table saw to a 2 in. height, and set the rip fence 3/4 in. away from the blade. Make a cut into the two end-grain edges, with the cork-faced side of the block facing out for both cuts.
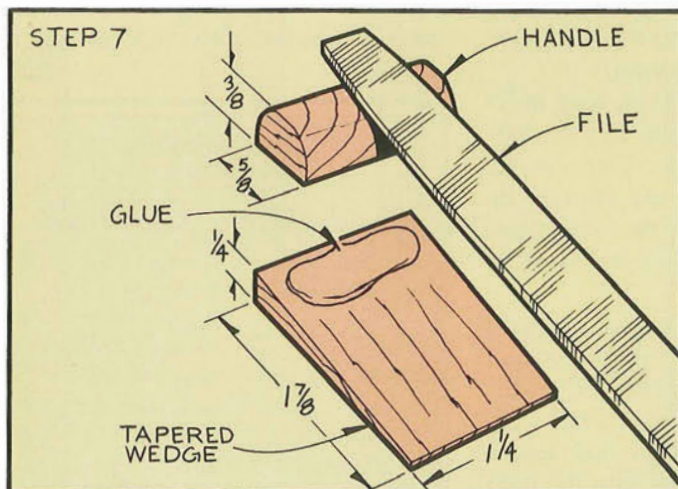
STEP 4

FENCE

PUSH STICK

CORK

SOURCE BLOCK

Step 4: Reset the blade to a 3/4 in. height, leave the fence in the same position as Step 3, and make the two crosscuts as shown. Be sure to use a push stick between the blade and fence, as shown, so the cut-off doesn't kick back at you.
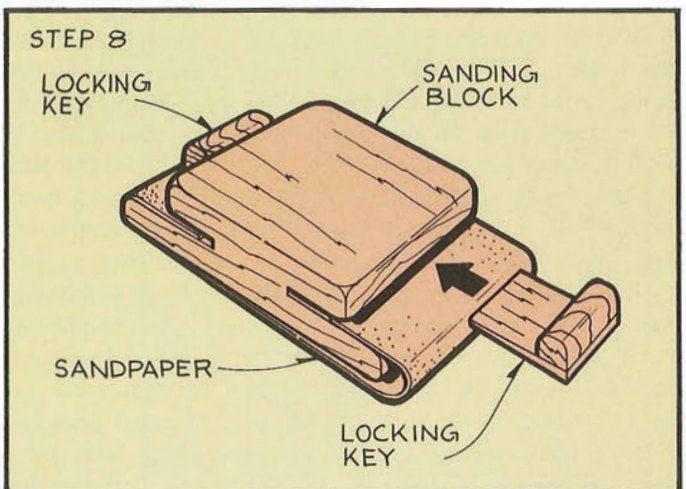
STEP 5

HAND SHAPE ROUND

SOURCE BLOCK

1/4 ROUND-OVER BIT

TABLE

CORK

Step 5: Use the router table equipped with a 1/4 in. radius rounding over bit to round the edges as shown. The inside edge can be rounded by hand, using a file and some sandpaper.

STEP 6

SOURCE BLOCK

3

MITER GAUGE

Step 6: Raise the blade to 1 3/4 in. high, and make two ripping cuts to produce the three sanding blocks.

STEP 7

HANDLE

FILE

GLUE

TAPERED WEDGE

Step 7: Using scrap, make the sandpaper locking keys. These are just tapered wedges with small blocks glued in place to serve as handles. Use a file and sandpaper to round the top edges of the key handles. Make two keys for each sanding block.

STEP 8

LOCKING KEY

SANDING BLOCK

SANDPAPER

LOCKING KEY

Step 8: Round the top edges and final sand the blocks. Then cut 3 in. wide by 10 in. lengths of sandpaper and mount on the blocks. Adjust the tapers on the locking keys as needed to hold the sandpaper securely. No finish is necessary.

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Matt Becker
Internet Production Coordinator