

Do It Yourself

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Butcher-Block Table: Base

From "[Wood Works](#)"

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With the top assembled and glued up, work can begin on building the base for the butcher-block table.

Materials:

Ash stock (8-quarter stock for legs; 4-quarter for aprons, stretchers and shelves)

Table saw

Multi-router

Straight-edge

Carpenter's pencil

Carpenter's tape

Woodworker's glue

Clamps

Safety glasses or goggles

Safety Alert: Always wear safety goggles or safety glasses when working with wood, power-tools, saws, drills, routers, etc.

As seen in the prototype, the base consists of four legs, aprons, stretchers, and slats that span the bottom to create a storage shelf. Mortise and loose-tenon joinery is used to hold the base together, and a slight 1/8-inch reveal is left where the aprons join the legs (**figure A**) and where the stretchers connect at the bottom.

The height of the base is 33-3/4 inches (**figure B**). When combined with the 1-3/4-inch thickness of the top (**figure C**), the overall height of the table is brought to standard counter-top height. For design, the thickness of the top matches the dimensions of the legs -- 1-3/4 inches square.

Base and Joinery

- Cut the leg stock to a length of 33-3/4 inches (**figure D**) at the table saw.



Figure A



Figure B



Figure C

- At the table-saw, cut the apron-stock and stretcher stock to. Cut the apron stock to a length of 12-1/2 for the two short aprons (**figure E**), and 19 inches for the two long aprons. The ash apron-stock is 3/4-inches thick and 3-1/2 inches wide.



Figure D

The lower stretcher stock is also 3/4-inch thick, but for visual balance is only 3 inches wide. Cut the stretcher stock to 12-1/2 inches long.

With the stock all cut to length, you can begin laying out marks for the mortises. The mortises are all 3/8 inch wide by 2-1/2 inches long by 1 inch deep. For the aprons, they are centered in the thickness of the apron stock (**figure F**).



Figure E

The mortises on the legs are offset (**figure G**) to form the 1/8-inch reveal mentioned above.

Also lay out the mortises on the ends of the stretcher stock. As with the aprons, these mortises are centered in the stock. The matching mortises on the legs measure 8 inches up from the bottom. Two mortises are also cut at the top of the legs for the aprons.



Figure F

For greatest efficiency, use a multi-router to batch-cut the mortises in the aprons (**figure H**), stretchers and legs.

Make tenon-stock from ash as well. The tenon stock is 3/8-inch thick by 2-1/2 inches wide and radiused with a 3/16-inch round-over bit to create the rounded edges (**figure I**) to match the mortises. At the table-saw, cut the tenons to length at 2 inches.



Figure G

With all of the stock and joinery for the base cut (excluding the shelves, which will be added later), conduct a dry-fit to ensure that all of the pieces fit together securely and squarely (**figure J**). Make sure that the alignment is square, and make any adjustments that are necessary for the joints to fit tightly.

Tip: To ensure that the legs fit squarely, make some spacers from MDF that are the same length as the long aprons. Clamp them in position when dry-fitting (and later gluing up) the assembly.



Figure H

In the segment that follows, the shelves are made and the base is

assembled and glued up.

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Figure I



Figure J