Do It Yourself

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Workbench: Top, Vise and Trim

From "Woodworking"
episode DIW-205 -- More Projects »

Once the base is assembled, it's time to create a top that's equally strong. A durable top not only creates a fully functional work surface but also allows the vise to be properly secured. Johnson creates his workbench top by layering sheets of medium-density fiberboard (MDF) -- instead of plywood -- and securing the layers with both glue and screws. The boards are layered upside down so that screws don't show on the top surface. The vise is also applied before the top is turned over. Johnson says a second person should be available to help maneuver the boards into position.

The MDF -- or medium-density fiberboard -- used for the workbench top is stronger than regular plywood. To give it additional strength, Johnson layers three sheets of MDF -- upside down, so that the screws are hidden underneath the top.

Note: This workbench originally appeared in *Workbench Magazine*. Complete plans to build this workbench can be purchased at www.workbenchplans.com .

Materials:

3 sheets of 3/4" medium-density fiberboard
Woodworker's glue
Clamps
1-1/4" screws
Drill and 1/4" bit
2" lag bolts
Wood trim
Nail gun
Vise

Figure A

1. Cut the three sheets of fiberboard to desired length. Place first sheet face down. Apply glue generously to the surface (**figure A**) and layer second sheet directly on top of the first.

2. Predrill holes and apply 1-1/4" screws to pull the two sheets together (**figure B**).

3. Apply another layer of glue, position the third sheet over the other two and use screws to secure in place. (Screws may be applied in a random pattern or in rows, but they need to be spaced over the surface about 6" apart.)

4. Position vise (remember, it should be upside down so the bolts won't show at top), checking to see whether any of the screws will present a problem. Remove any troublesome screws (the vise will hide any empty holes).

5. Reposition vise as desired and use 3/8" drill to drill directly through the holes in the vise (**figure C**).

6. Add lag bolts to secure the vise. Use ratchet to tighten the lag bolts (**figure D**).

7. Finally, cut and nail wood trim to the top's edges to create a finished appearance **figure E**).

Figure B

Figure C

Figure D

Figure E

RESOURCES:

Workbench Vise
Model: Record 52 ED
Record Tools
Website: recordtools.com

Setting Up Shop: The Practical Guide to Designing and Building Your Dream Shop
Model: 1561585556
Author: Sandor Nagyszalanczy

Making Workbenches : Planning, Building, Outfitting
Model: 0806905352
Author: Sam Allen

The Workbench Book

Model: 1561582700
Author: Scott Landis

The Small Wood Shop (The Best of Fine Woodworking)
Model: 1561580619
Author: Helen Albert (Editor)

Workbench Magazine
How-to magazine featuring a wide variety of woodworking projects.
Workbench Magazine
Website: www.workbenchmagazine.com

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