

build on tradition



Meet the

HOMETOWN HERO

Glen Rundell from Kyneton, Victoria, is a traditional chair-maker. He is also a champion of traditional trades – a believer that, without exposure, skills such as blacksmithing and coopering (barrel-making) that have been refined over hundreds of years will disappear. Glen founded the Lost Trades Fair to showcase traditional artisans and bring their skills to a wider audience in the hope that they would not just survive, but thrive. He also holds courses to give people hands-on experience with the art of chair-making.

For more information, visit
rundellandrundell.com.au

Learn about the art of working with wood from a master craftsman

There is nothing quite like the beauty and grace of handcrafted furniture. The traditional art of chair-making is a specialised trade that has been practised for centuries. While perfecting this skill takes years of work and dedication, there are a few tools, tricks and tips that you can use with any woodworking project you take on. In this project sheet we show you how to make a simple yet sturdy stool.

steps



timeless tools

You won't find these at your local hardware store! The tools used in traditional furniture making and woodworking are almost as beautiful as the products of their handler.



- 1. The shelves of master craftsmen** include wonderful tools such as granny tooth planes and shoulder planes.
- 2. Glen sharpens a drawknife.** It is used to quickly remove large slices of wood to form a rough shape.
- 3. The spokeshave is a plane-like tool** for fine finishing of a piece. It is particularly suited to shaping chair legs.



USED IN STEP 1 The smoothing plane will help give a finer finish to timber after a rough shaping.



USED IN STEP 3 A tenon saw is a fine-toothed saw with a rigid blade used for cutting across timber.



USED IN STEP 4 The block plane is smaller than a smoothing plane and is used for fine shaping.



USED IN STEP 5 The compass (remember geometry class?) is used to draw a circle from a central point.



USED IN STEP 6 The brad point bit has a raised centre point that digs into timber so it won't skip when drilling.



USED IN STEP 9 The Japanese handsaw cuts on the pull stroke, unlike other saws that cut on the push stroke.

How the stool was made

This project is a great introduction to traditional tools and techniques

steps



Masking tape along the blade of the tenon saw is used as a guide to control depth of cut



STEP 1 Legs are the first part of the stool to be made. A length of timber, in this case pine, is shaped into a hexagon using a smoothing plane.

Tip When using a hand plane always plane in direction of grain. Begin at one end and continue along whole job in one pass.

STEP 2 Legs are tapered from hexagon at one end to circular at the other. The next

step is to mark one end of leg with the circle it needs to be tapered to. A 19mm forstner drill bit is used to define this circle on the centre of the leg. It creates a flat-bottomed hole with a shallow centre point.

Tip A bench vice is a must-have in your workshop. It keeps the job steady and at a comfortable working height. If you have a metal vice, protect soft timbers from being damaged by the metal jaws.

STEP 3 To mark out length of circular shape on top of leg, cuts are made across leg 60mm from the end using a tenon saw.

steps



STEP 4

STEP 4 Once it has been marked out, the taper on the leg is created using a block plane.

STEP 5 Circular seat of stool and positions for legs are marked out on a square block of timber.

Tip To find the central point of a square or rectangle simply draw the diagonals and find where they intersect.

STEP 6 To get the angle for the holes in the seat where the legs will go, Glen uses a surprisingly simple technique. Two squares are set up in front of mirrors on either axis of the leg. One is at the angle leg needs to be (here 10°) and other is vertical, as leg is only angled outwards and not to the side. The drill is lined up with squares by checking the reflection in mirrors. When they are both in line the hole is drilled. Repeating for all leg holes ensures they are all the same.

Tip When doing precision drilling, always clamp down the work and hold drill with both hands for more control.

STEP 7 Sometimes modern technology is just too good to pass up! Glen uses lasers to line up the reaming tool, which flares out the hole in the seat to take the tapered end of the leg. Laser tools can save you a lot of time on jobs large and small. Apart from lining up tools in woodworking, they are handy for taking measurements in larger building jobs and project plumb and level lines over long distances.

Tip Hand-operated cutting tools give you accuracy on fine work that you can't get with power tools. You can adjust the pressure and force used to more accurately control how much timber you are removing.

Keep planer blades razor sharp so you have very fine shavings. You get a smoother finish and it's easier to use the tool



STEP 5



STEP 6



STEP 7

steps



STEP 8

STEP 8 The circular seat is cut out using a jigsaw

Tip Fit your jigsaw with a fine-toothed blade. The cut will take a bit longer but you'll get a better finish that will take less time to sand smooth.

STEP 9 Sand edges of seat so they are flat and smooth.

Tip To get a flat finish when hand sanding, wrap sandpaper around a cork block rather than just holding it in your hands.

STEP 10 To prepare legs to go into seat, a slot is cut in circular end using a Japanese handsaw.



STEP 9



STEP 10



STEP 11

STEP 11 This end is then glued and pushed through holes in seat. Shims are driven into slot forcing leg against side of hole. This, together with glue, holds legs in place without any screws or nails.

STEP 12 When glue has dried, the leg and shim on top of stool are cut off.



STEP 12

Use a paintbrush to apply the glue. You'll use less and it will be easier to clean up any excess.