

How To Use A Wood Chisel

Contrary to popular belief, the wood chisel is not a tool used for heavy work. It is a sharp, delicate instrument; and in the hands of an expert woodworker, it is not unlike a scalpel in the hands of a surgeon. It is used to cut and shave wood and must be kept sharp at all times so precision work can be done with it. Never, never use a wood chisel as a prying tool, as this will ruin the bevel edge forever. Never use the wood chisel on metal either. Only occasionally does the wood chisel require the assistance of a wooden mallet for the purpose of embedding the cutting edge deeply into a piece of wood. For the purpose of the practice recipes below, it is essential you work on a bench or table surface and utilize a small vise or C-clamp to hold the wood securely.

Utensils

Combination square
vise
or C-clamp
Sharp pencil
Crosscut saw or hacksaw
3/4" inch general purpose chisel
with wooden or plastic
handle
Wooden mallet

Ingredients

Piece of lumber, 2" inches by
3" inches, 12" inches long

To Cut a 1/2" Inch-Deep Dado (Groove)

1. Working from one end of lumber, measure off 3" inches with square and mark with pencil (Fig. 8A).
2. Now measure off 5" inches from the same end (Fig. 8A). Mark as above.
3. Turn wood clockwise on its side and extend lines drawn on face (Fig. 8B).
4. Turn wood counterclockwise to the other side and extend lines as above.
5. Mark off 1/2" inch from top edge on both sides of the face (Fig. 8B). These are the depth lines of the dado to be chiseled out.
6. Now turn wood so original face is up and mark off 1/4" inch lines from one edge to the other (Fig. 8C).
7. Place wood in vise and clamp securely.
8. Starting from either the extreme left-hand side or the right, saw down along face lines to depth lines drawn on sides.

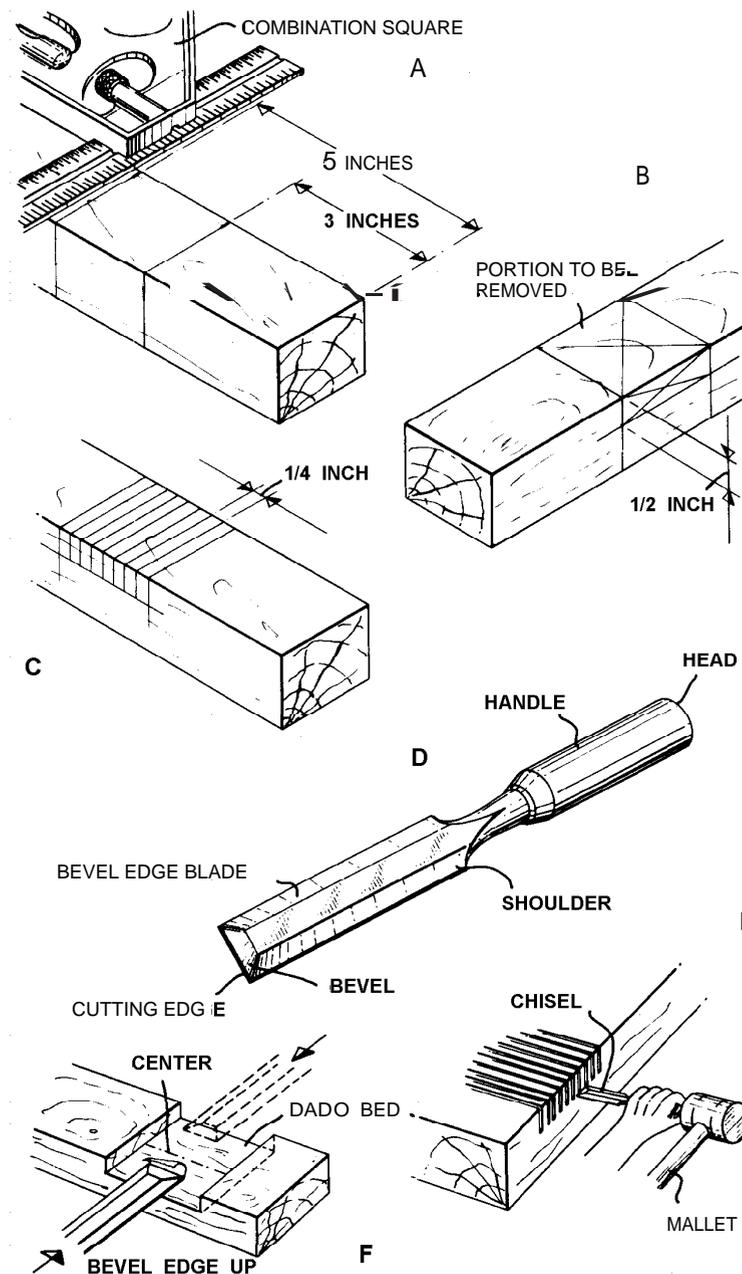


Figure 8.
Chiseling a Dado



Permissions For Reprints Contact: 1-800-640-8285

Just make sure that the saw lines on the outer two markings are inside, not outside, the lines.

9. With chisel (Fig. 8D) in one hand and mallet in the other, tap away at the narrow rows of wood until they are all removed (Fig. 8E).
10. Now grasp the handle of the chisel and the shoulder of the blade in one hand.
11. With bevel edge up, place chisel flat on the dado bed at the left side of the dado and shave toward the center until smooth (Fig. 8F).
12. Repeat process from right side to center until the dado is smooth.