

Fish Sticks

This trivet is simple and fun to make – in any number of shapes.

This simple trivet is incredibly easy to make, and very inexpensive. I spent \$16.44 (including tax) for four 1/2" x 2" x 4' pieces of red oak stock at the home center (and if you happen to have scraps and a table saw, well, this fun project is basically free).

Begin by clamping a stop-block 8" to the left of your miter saw blade (if you're right-handed), then proceed to cut 15 8"-long pieces. The stop block keeps you from having to measure and mark each piece – butt the end of the stock against the block for each cut and hold the workpiece with your left hand.

Now grab a small piece of scrap (or use the end of one of your 8"-long pieces) to serve as a stand-off block for the next cuts. A stand-off block is basically just a spacer that's used to set up a cut, then removed before the cut is made, to keep little pieces from getting trapped against a fence and perhaps rubbing up against the saw blade, which could cause the piece to go flying (possibly into your face – ouch). Now clamp your stop-block to the fence to the right of the blade at 2 1/4" plus the width of your stand-off block, hold the stand-off block against your stop-block, and butt your stock against it. Hold the workpiece in place as you remove the stand-off block, then make the cut. Repeat this nine more times.

Make a Sandwich

Now sandwich two sets of three 8" pieces, using glue on both sides of the center pieces, then clamp them together until the glue sets. These will be your head and tail pieces.

With those dry, start stacking your pieces, alternating between long and short. Drill two pilot holes near the center of all pieces other than the two sandwiches using



A fishy project. This trivet is a quick, easy and fun project for kids of all ages.

a 1/32" bit, and drive a 3/4" brad into each of those holes until the pointy ends are just emerging from the other side. (If you've a pinner or 18-gauge nailer, eschew the pilot holes and make quick work of the build.)

Now, set your combination square to 2 7/8", grab one of the sandwiches and reference off the end to find the edge placement for the first "spine" piece. Add glue to the backside of the spine piece, and drive the



Stand off for safety. With small workpieces, it's a good idea to use a spacer (also called a stand-off block) between the blade and fence to keep the cut piece from getting trapped.



A fish ladder. Keep stacking until all your pieces are used, then cap with one of the “sandwiches.”



A cleaning rule. A damp rag over the end of a 6" rule is handy to get in between the pieces for glue cleanup.

brads home. You'll have to tilt your square slightly to register it against the first long piece as you find the placement of the second long piece. Repeat until all the single pieces are used up. Try to avoid too much glue squeeze-out – and if (when) you do get squeeze-out, wrap a damp rag around a 6" steel rule to get in between the pieces and clean it up while the glue is still wet. The final piece (the head or tail, depending on how you look at it), is simply glued in place,

then the entire piece is clamped until the glue is dry.

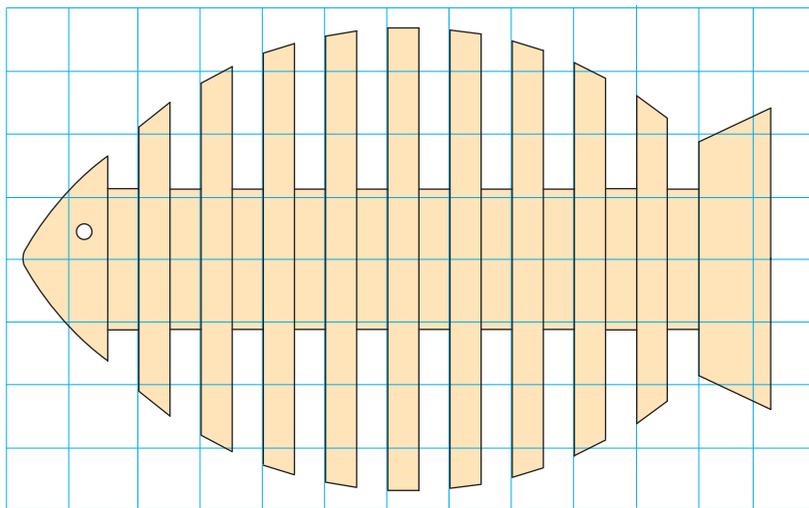
Choose Your Animal

Now trace the fish pattern (or whatever shape you like) on top, and cut it out with a jigsaw. Clean up the cuts with sandpaper, drill a hole for eyes (and hanging), and you're done. **PW**

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Jigsaw to shape. To keep yourself from having to do too much end-grain sanding (not fun), use a good jigsaw blade to cut down on blow out. (We recommend Bosch “Xtra-clean for Wood” blades.)



1 square = 1"

FISH STICKS TRIVET

Fish Sticks

	NO.	ITEM	DIMENSIONS (INCHES)			MATERIAL
			T	W	L	
<input type="checkbox"/>	15	Cross pieces	1/2	2	8	Red oak
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	“Spine” spacers	1/2	2	2 1/4	Red oak

About This Column

Our “I Can Do That” column features projects that can be completed by any woodworker with a modest (but decent) kit of tools in less than two days of shop time, and using raw materials that are available at any home center. We offer a free online manual in PDF format that explains all the tools and shows you how to perform the basic operations in a step-by-step format. You'll learn to rip with a jigsaw, crosscut with a miter saw and drill straight with the help of our manual.



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