

First Project Planner

Plan the build before you cut the board.

A focused five-page planning tool for newer woodworkers. Use it to choose a sensible project, prepare materials and tools, map the build sequence, and pause for safety before starting.

This planner is general educational information, not professional instruction. Woodworking involves risk. Follow tool manuals, use appropriate protective equipment, and seek qualified help when needed.

HOW TO USE IT

☐ Complete one planner per project	☐ Check dimensions before buying material
☐ Review each step before powering a tool	☐ Write down questions for an experienced builder

Choose a project you can finish.

A smaller, well-planned build teaches more than an ambitious project abandoned halfway through.

PROJECT NAME AND PURPOSE

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

SCOPE CHECK

☐ Dimensions are clear	☐ Joinery is within my skill level
☐ I have a suitable workspace	☐ Budget has a buffer
☐ I can finish in the time available	☐ I know where to ask for help

ONE THING I WILL SIMPLIFY

BIGGEST UNKNOWN TO RESOLVE BEFORE STARTING

Make the shopping trip boring.

Confirm final dimensions, material thickness, grain direction, and allowance for mistakes before purchasing.

PART / MATERIAL	QTY	ROUGH SIZE	FINAL SIZE	NOTES

Before buying

☐ Rechecked plan dimensions	☐ Confirmed actual material thickness
☐ Added waste/extra material	☐ Checked fasteners and finish compatibility

Decide the order of work.

Dry-run the process in your head. If a later step becomes hard after assembly, change the sequence now.

TOOL READINESS

☐ Manuals reviewed	☐ Blades/bits appropriate
☐ Guards and safety features working	☐ Clamps and supports available
☐ Dust control ready	☐ Measuring tools checked

BUILD SEQUENCE

STEP	ACTION	CHECK BEFORE MOVING ON
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Stop. Look. Then start.

This checklist cannot cover every hazard. Use it as a pause point alongside manufacturer instructions and qualified training.

☐ Workspace is clear, stable, and well lit
☐ Eye and hearing protection are ready
☐ Respiratory protection matches the task
☐ Loose clothing, jewelry, and hair are secured
☐ Workpiece support and clamps are adequate
☐ Hands can remain clear of cutting paths
☐ Dust collection or ventilation is ready
☐ I am rested, focused, and not rushed

THE HIGHEST-RISK STEP IN THIS BUILD

HOW I WILL REDUCE THAT RISK

STOP CONDITIONS

☐ A measurement or setup does not look right	☐ A tool sounds or behaves unexpectedly
☐ The workpiece shifts or binds	☐ I am unsure how to continue safely

If any stop condition occurs: switch off, disconnect power when appropriate, and reassess before continuing.