

INSTRUCTIONS

for Building the
Napkin Holder



A Few Remarks About Making the Napkin Holder

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A WARNING - PLEASE READ

Woodworking can be dangerous! It's up to you to determine if you can safely use the tools and perform the tasks needed to complete this and any other woodworking project. If you are unsure, STOP! Get advice from someone knowledgeable or do some careful studying on your own. Be safe!

Always wear at least an appropriate N95 dust mask or respirator when sanding or spraying finishes. For advice about dust masks and respirators, visit this link:
<https://woodworkingtoolkit.com/best-dust-masks-respirators/>

**READ, UNDERSTAND, AND FOLLOW ALL OF THE
INSTRUCTIONS AND WARNINGS THAT CAME
WITH YOUR TOOLS. BE CAREFUL!**

Why Build This Project?

The Napkin Holder makes an attractive addition to a kitchen counter, kitchen table or dining table. The napkins rest at a convenient angle so that it's easy to pick up a clean one.

Unlike common napkin holders, this one doesn't squeeze the napkins together or require you to lift something out of the way before selecting another napkin. And, your napkins won't droop to one side or the other.

It's made with 3/8" walnut.



Key Design Features of the Napkin Holder

- The Sides are 4 1/4" high by 10" long, and the overall width of the assembly is 7 3/4"
- The Back and Base are glued into 1/8"-deep dados that are cut into the Sides
- A 1 1/2" hole on each side give the unit a lighter appearance
- No nails or screws are used
- Material: 3/8" walnut. Walnut is beautiful and easy to work with.
- Glue: Titebond III. This waterproof glue cures dark to better match the color of the walnut.
- Finish: Multiple coats of clear, spray-on shellac

Required Skill Level

You should have intermediate woodworking skills before attempting to build this project.

Details of the SketchUp File and Equivalent PDF File

File *Napkin_Holder_14_SKETCHUP_VERSION_8.skp* is the SketchUp design for the Napkin Holder. All of the dimensions and other necessary details are incorporated here. If you should find a dimension or other detail missing, it can be determined by examining this file. And, you can orbit and move the model around for a better look at everything.

File *Napkin_Holder_14_SKETCHUP_VERSION_8.pdf* contains all of the images and dimensions from the SketchUp file. Use this file if you're not familiar with, or don't use, SketchUp.

If you would like to view the SketchUp file (.skp) without the expense of paying for SketchUp, you can download the free SketchUp Viewer here:

<https://www.sketchup.com/products/sketchup-viewer>

Use the Included SketchUp or PDF File to Follow Along with These Descriptions

There are 10 pages in this design. The heading of each section below corresponds to the name of a particular SketchUp/PDF page.

Assembly

This is a perspective view of the Napkin Holder. The same colors are used throughout the entire file to easily identify each component.

Upside Down

This is a view of the bottom of the Napkin Holder. Each component's name is identified.

Notice the note "Back Fits into Rabbet on Base." A shallow rabbet is cut into the Base. The Back fits into that rabbet. The rabbet will be shown later.

Exploded

This view shows how all four components are related to one another. All of the components are identified as they were in the *Upside Down* view.

Notice in this view, too, the note "Back Fits into Rabbet on Base." The end of the rabbet is visible here. It should be clear in this drawing how the Back fits into the rabbet in the Base.

Sides

The inner side of both Sides are shown here. The 3/8" wide by 1/8" deep dados on one side are the mirror image of the dados on the opposite side.

The dimensions and angles of the dados are shown. These are provided as references only. A 1-to-1 pattern will be provided later for laying out the dado cuts.

All outer edges of both Sides will receive a 1/8" radius round-over. The round-over is not shown in the drawings.

Back

The Back is a simple rectangle with a couple of added details. The two top corners are given a 1/4" radius. A 1/8" radius round-over is applied only to the top two edges and the top corners. The round-over must not extend below the corners.

Base

Like the Back, the top two corners of the Base have a 1/4" radius. And, like the Back, a 1/8" radius round-over is applied only to the top two edges and the top corners. The round-over must not extend below the corners.

A 1/4" radius round-over is applied to one side of the bottom edge. A 3/8" wide by 1/16" deep rabbet is applied to the other side of the bottom edge.

Cutting Templates

This is a pair of templates cut from a single piece of scrap plywood or MDF (Medium Density Fiberboard.) The Square Template and L-Template are needed to facilitate the cutting of the dados in the Sides.

The drawing begins with a 12"x12" piece of material, but anything near that size will be satisfactory.

It is imperative that the indicated saw kerf cuts be square to each other. The accuracy and alignment of the dados on the two Sides depend on square cuts in these templates. The drawing assumes that a table saw will be used to make the kerf cuts, but any method you use must result in straight, clean edges on both pieces.

Cutting Guide 1

This is merely a pattern taken from the design to create a 1-to-1 pattern for Side 1. *This not the 1:1 pattern.* The 1:1 pattern is contained in file *Napkin_Holder_Cutting_Outlines.docx*. That file will be explained later.

Cutting Guide 2

This is merely a pattern taken from the design to create a 1-to-1 pattern for Side 2. *This not the 1:1 pattern.* The 1:1 pattern is contained in file *Napkin_Holder_Cutting_Outlines.docx*. That file will be explained later.

Routing Setup

This is a drawing that will be used for describing the dado routing process later. It can be ignored at this time.

Appearance

This drawing has no application during the build of the project. It simply shows what the assembled project will look like.

Notice that all exposed edges are sharp. In fact, all of the exposed edges, including the holes will receive a 1/8" radius round-over. The edges of the dados and the edges of the material captured in the dados do not receive any round-over.

Building the Napkin Holder



Figure 1. The Napkin Holder

Obtain Some 3/8" Walnut

You might prefer a different species of wood, but walnut has a warm appearance under several coats of clear shellac.

If you prefer to use walnut but don't know where to obtain 3/8" material, this is one source:

<https://woodchuckswood.com/collections/thickness-3-8-inch/products/1-walnut-3-8-9-36>

One 3/8"x9"x36" board is more than sufficient for building one Napkin Holder.

I don't speak for this vendor, Woodchuck's Wood, and I don't receive any benefit from them. I will simply say that the kiln-dried walnut I received was of good quality. It was a little bit thicker than 3/8" so some sanding was needed to get it to fit into the 3/8" dados.

Sand the Material Before Cutting

It's much easier to sand the material now, before it's cut into smaller pieces. The walnut I bought from Woodchuck's Wood came pre-sanded. I went over both sides with 120-grit paper using a random-orbit sander. I finished with 180-grit.

Grain Direction

Look at Figure 2 to see how the grain is oriented in each piece.



Figure 2. Grain Direction

The cut directions shown in Figure 2 will minimize the visibility of end grain. That is, long grain will be visible along the top and bottom edges of the Sides and the top edge of the Back and Base.

Of course, end grain will be visible at the ends of the Sides. It will be visible also for only a short distance below the 1/4" radius corners at the top edges of the Back and Base.

Cut Each Piece to Its Final Size

The pieces can be cut to their final sizes at this time. No additional trimming or fitting will be needed. *It is imperative that the pieces be cut as close as possible to the dimensions specified in the SketchUp file or the equivalent PDF file.*

Accurate cuts are particularly needed so that the Side pieces you create will closely match the 1-to-1 cutting pattern that you will print and cut out next.

Print the 1-to-1 Cutting Patterns

Open file *Napkin_Holder_Cutting_Outlines.docx* by using *Microsoft Word*. Print both pages. The result should be an accurate 1:1 representation of the each of the two Sides.

If you don't have *Microsoft Word*, an alternate method is to download and install the free *Apache OpenOffice*:

<https://www.openoffice.org/download/>

OpenOffice is a free application that mimics the functions of *Microsoft Office* or *Microsoft 365*. **I do not have *OpenOffice*, nor am I familiar with its capabilities.** However, if it genuinely mimics *Microsoft Office* then it should produce the needed results. The particular *OpenOffice* application that mimics *Microsoft Word* is *Writer*. Use *Writer* to load and print file *Napkin_Holder_Cutting_Outlines.docx*.

If you are unable to print file *Napkin_Holder_Cutting_Outlines.docx*, it will be necessary to follow the dimensions in the *Sides* page of the *SketchUp* or equivalent PDF file. This will be more difficult, but it can be done.

All of the related instructions that follow assume that you have printed the 1-to-1 patterns.

Cut Out the 1-to-1 Cutting Patterns

Carefully cut out both of the 1-to-1 cutting patterns with scissors. Cut exactly along all of the outer edges. Make the cuts as straight and accurate as you possibly can.

Place a Pattern on a Side

Select one of the *Side* pieces of walnut to be *Side 1*. Examine the piece and select the nicest looking side; this side will be on the *outside* of the *Napkin Holder*. The *dados* will be cut into the *other* side.

Apply some double-sided tape to the nicest side of *Side 1*. Now use the tape to secure *Side 1* to a flat surface such as a workbench. You should use enough tape so that the workpiece doesn't rock back and forth. Securely press the workpiece into place.

Place the 1-to-1 pattern on the workpiece. Pay attention to the edges of the pattern with the large arrows, ignoring the other edges. ONLY THE EDGES WITH THE LARGE ARROWS MUST BE ALIGNED WITH THE EDGES OF THE WORKPIECE.

Be sure to align the edges of the pattern with the large arrows against the edges of the workpiece so that the entire lengths of the two edges of the pattern with the arrows are exactly aligned with the edges of the workpiece.

Once you are satisfied with the alignment of the pattern on the workpiece, very carefully place some weight on the pattern so the pattern won't move. I used a couple of water bottles as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Using Water Bottles to Hold the Pattern in Place

Recheck the alignment of the pattern after the weight has been applied. Correct the alignment as needed.

You'll Need Some Sewing Pins!

The purpose of the pattern is to correctly place the L-Template on the workpiece. But how can that be done? I've found that some of my wife's sewing pins are exactly what's needed.

You'll need 4 pins, preferably the type with a plastic ball on one end.

Press the pins through the paper pattern and into the workpiece as shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5. You might have to tap the pins in using a small hammer to ensure that they hold securely.

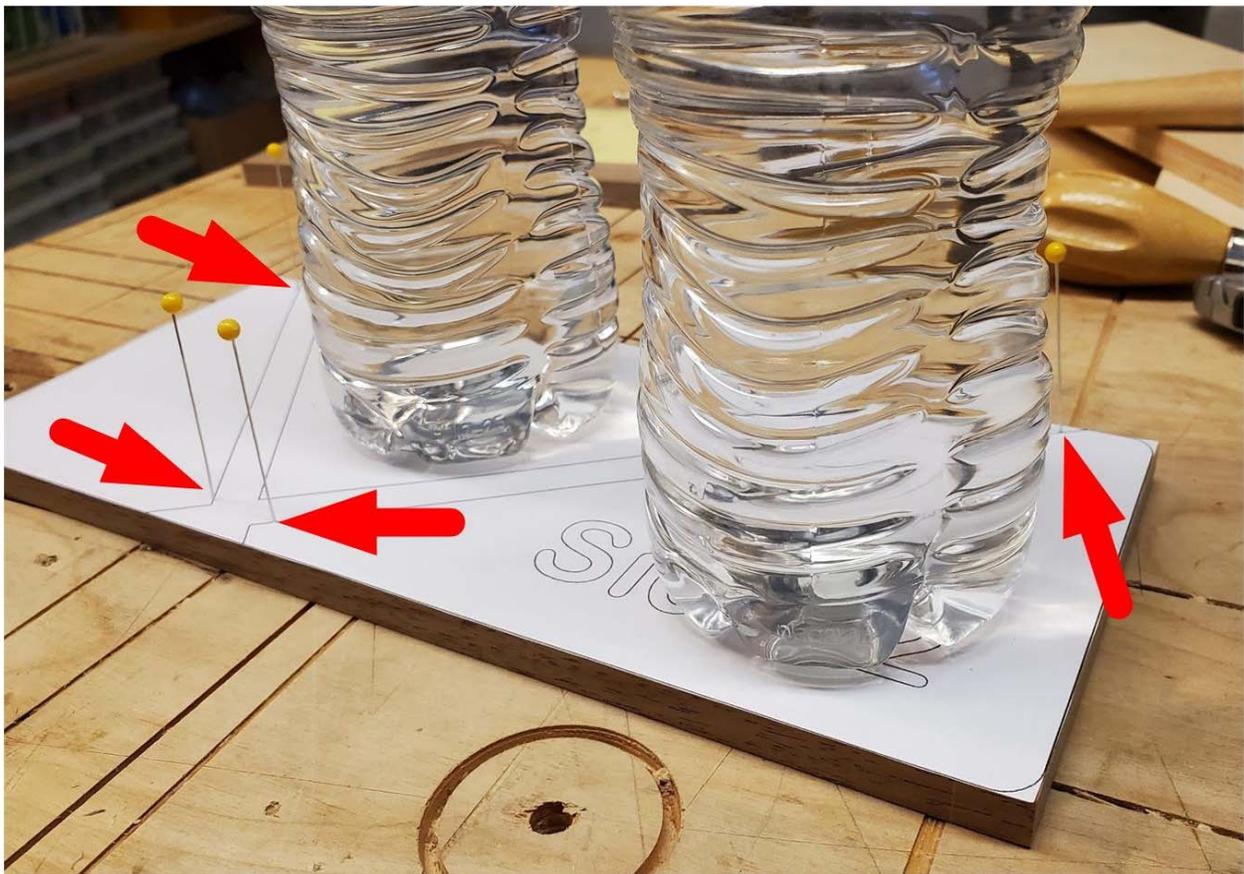


Figure 4. The Arrows Indicate the Pin Locations

Notice in Figure 4 that the pins are located near the ends of the layout lines.

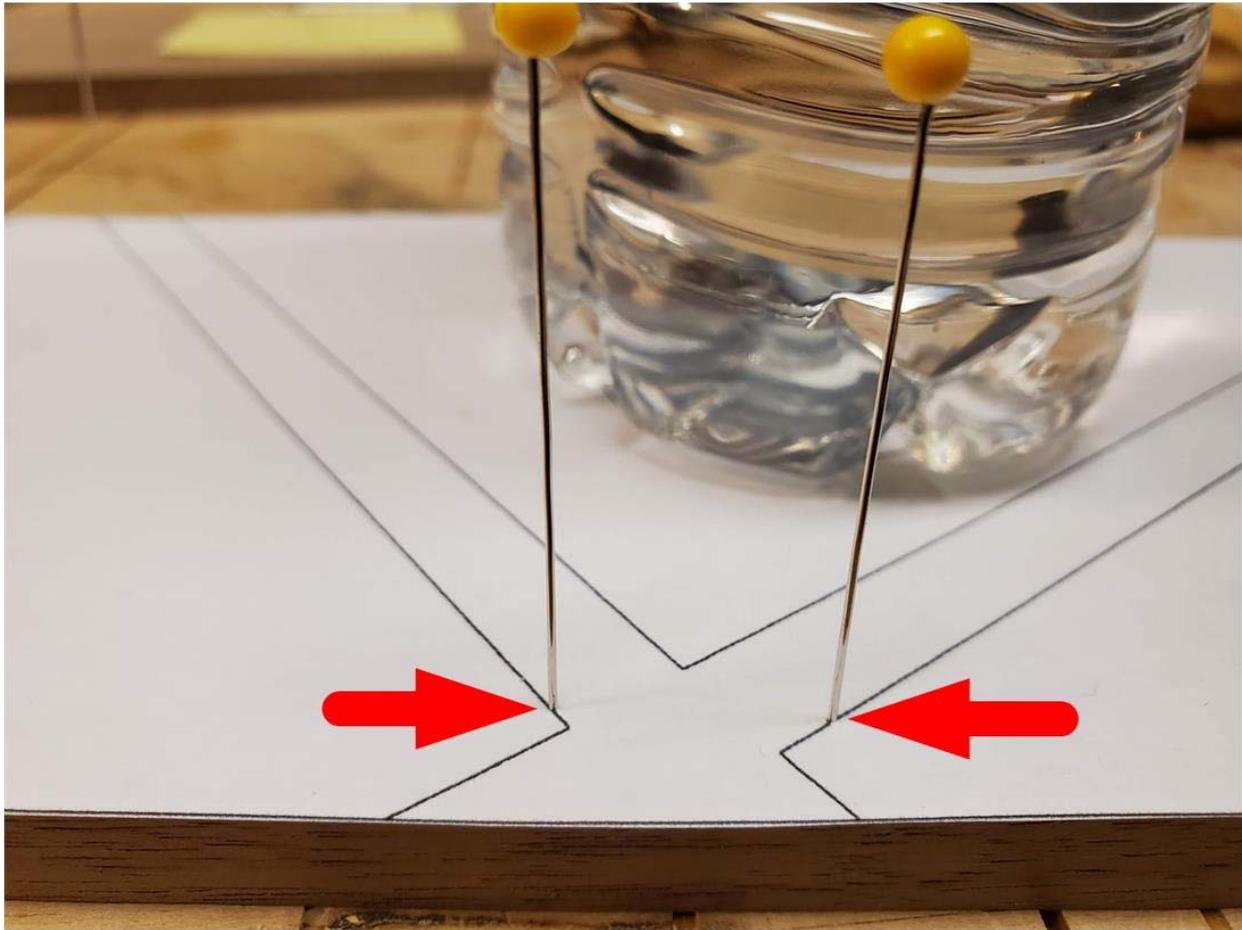


Figure 5. Detailed Pin Locations

Notice in Figure 5 that the outside edges of the pins are aligned with the outside edges of the lines. This is ideal as you will see shortly. Do this at both ends of both dados.

Set Up the L-Template

Look at Figure 6. Carefully lay the L-Template over the paper pattern so that the inside edges of the L-Template align simultaneously with all of the pins, being careful not to move any of the pins. You are ready to move on if everything lines up. You will have to re-insert one or more pins if things don't line up.

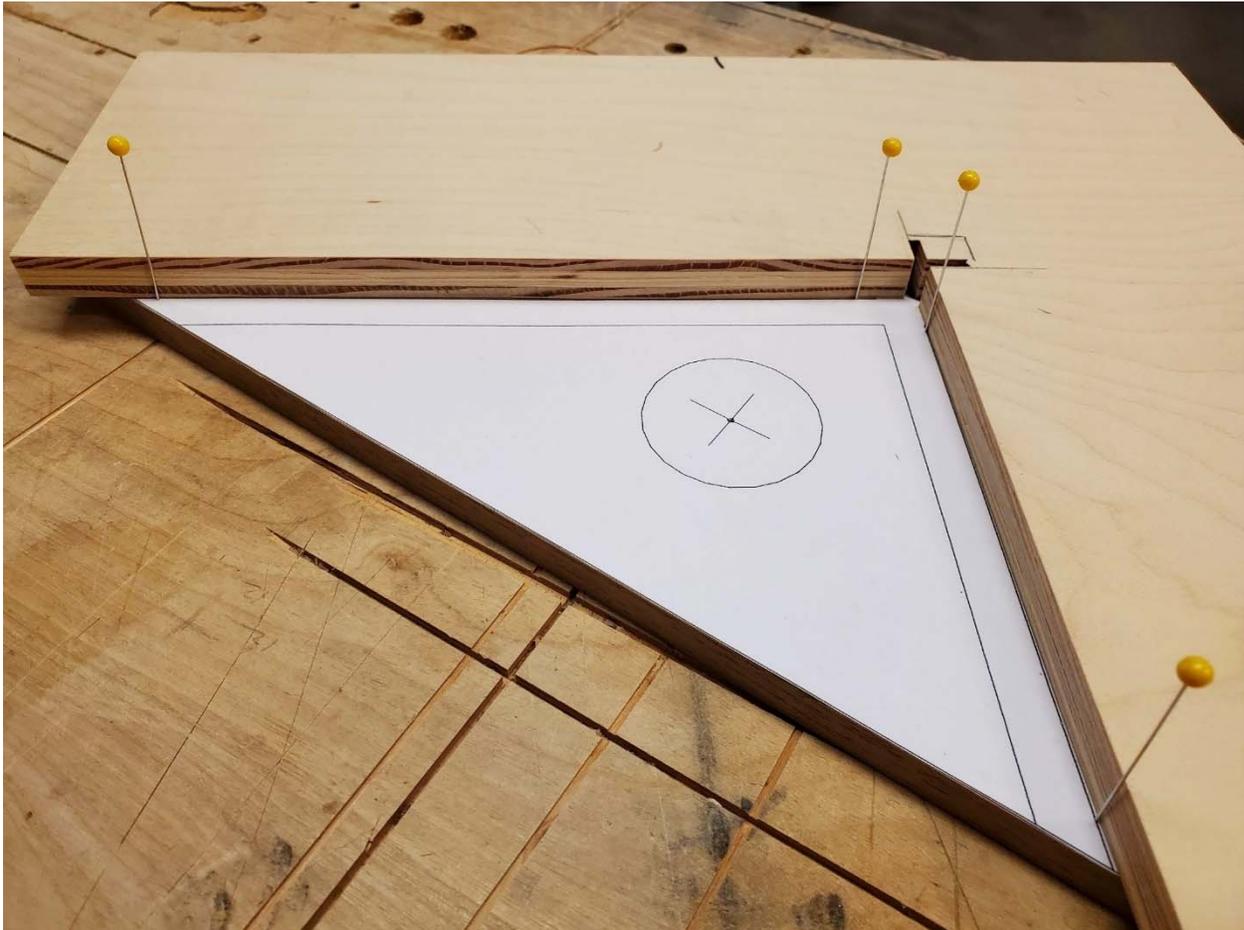


Figure 6. Align the L-Template With the Pins

Mark the Circle

Press the tip of an awl into the center of the circle in the paper pattern so that you mark that position in the workpiece.

Attach the L-Template to the Workpiece

Once everything is aligned, carefully remove the L-Template and lay it down nearby.

Being extremely careful, remove the paper pattern without disturbing the pins. If a pin should fall out, simply reinsert the pin into its correct hole in the workpiece.

Apply some double-sided tape to the workpiece while being sure that the tape does not extend into the area bounded by the pins.

Now lay the L-Template against the pins just as you did before you removed the paper pattern. Slowly lower the L-Template down onto the tape while keeping the inside edges against the pins and not moving the pins.

Press the L-Template down firmly against the tape once it's in place. The results should look like Figure 7.

Remove the pins.



Figure 7. L-Template, Pins, and Workpiece After Securing the L-Template

Set Up for Routing

Apply some double-sided tape to the exposed part of the workpiece in Figure 7. Stay well away from the L-Template so the tape won't interfere with the routing process.

Now stack up and arrange the Square Template and other material as shown in Figure 8. *The Square Template is only there as a rest for one side of the router.* **Do not attempt to run the router bit against the Square Template.**

Figure 9 might make things clearer.

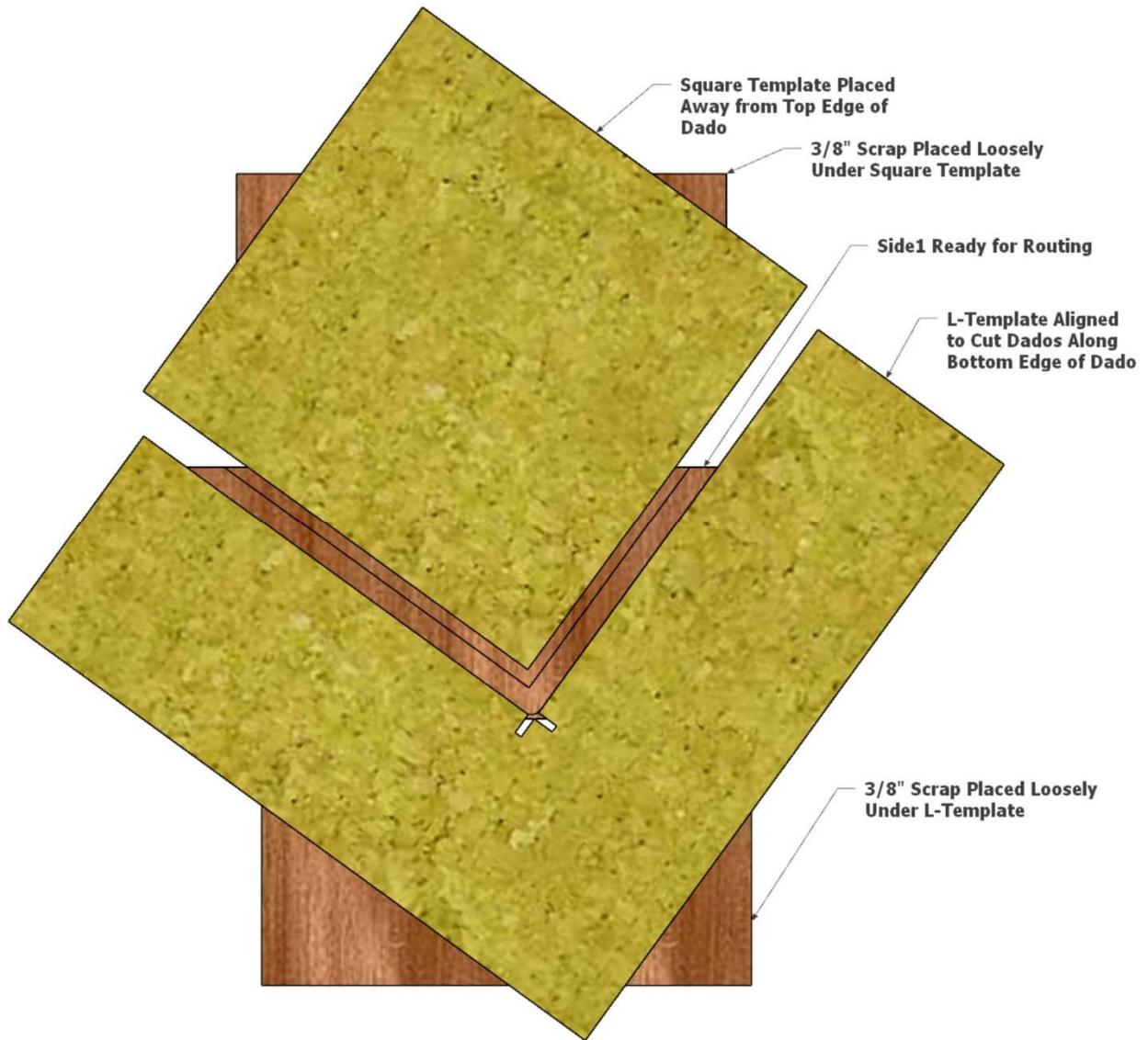


Figure 8. Templates, Workpiece, and Scrap Arranged for Routing

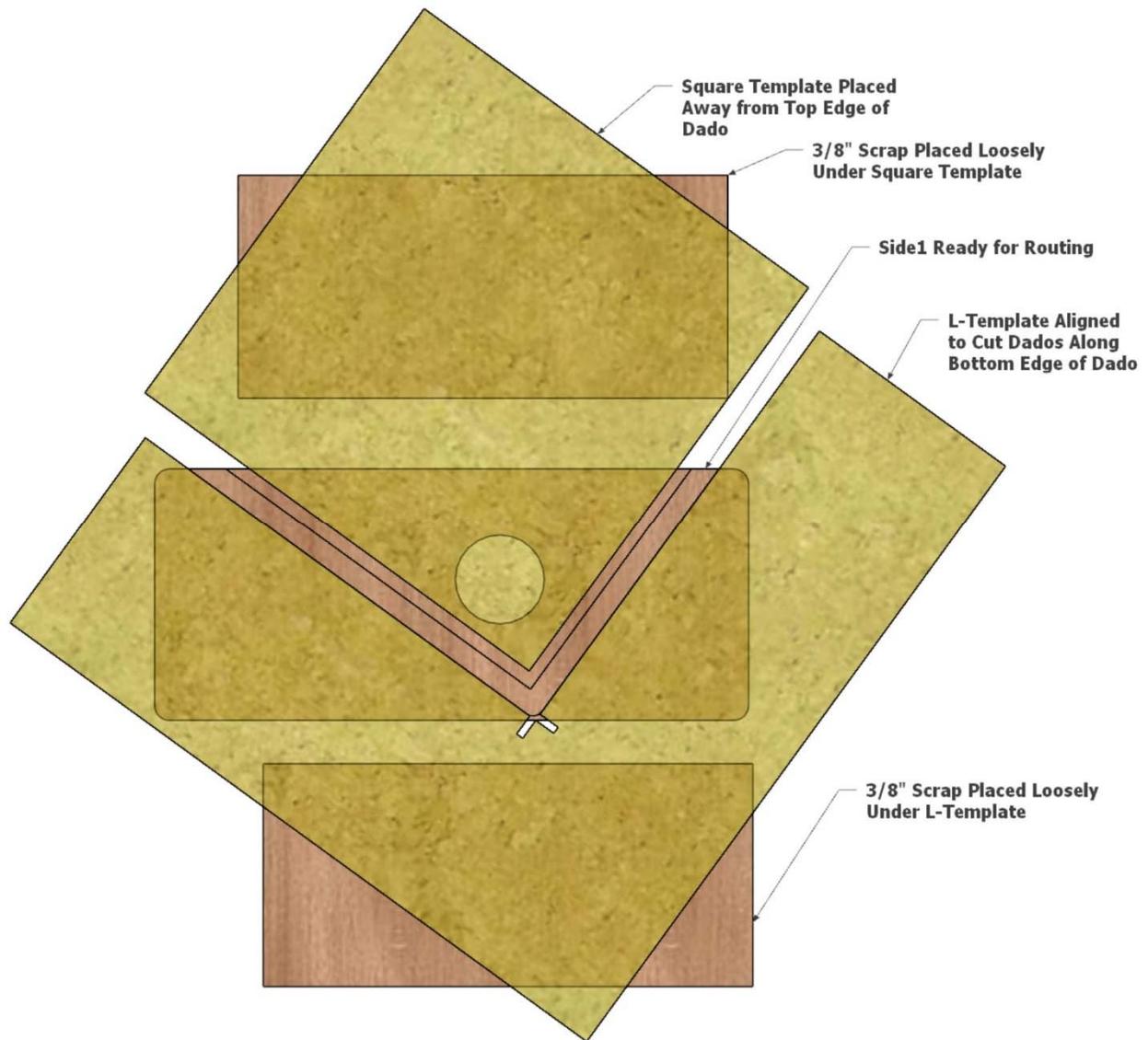


Figure 9. Same as Previous Figure but See-through for Clarity

Do the following.

- Press the Square Template into the double-sided tape so that the gap between the two templates is wider than the 3/8" width of the dado, as shown
- Slip a piece of 3/8" scrap underneath the Square Template
- Slip another piece of 3/8" scrap underneath the L-Template

The added scrap pieces help to prevent the templates from tipping as the router rides over them.

Routing the Dados

It's time to cut the dados.

You will need:

- Handheld router
- 3/8" flush-cutting pattern bit, that is, a flush-cutting bit with a bearing on top
- The bit must have a length suitable to make a 1/8" deep cut in the Side while the bearing on top rides along the edge of the L-Template

Insert the bit into the router and set it for 1/8" depth of cut. Make sure that the bit's bearing will ride against the edge of the L-Template.

The following procedure assumes that you are viewing your setup as you see it in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

Cutting Procedure. Read through all of the steps before proceeding:

1. Carefully place the router bit at the upper right between the two templates without touching the workpiece
2. Turn on the router
3. Carefully bring the bearing into contact with the L-Template (NOT the Square Template)
4. Move the bit along the edge of the L-Template and carefully bring the bit into the workpiece and begin the cut
5. Cut the dado along the edge of the L-Template until you reach the right angle
6. Continue the cut into the other leg of the dado until the bit exits the workpiece
7. Hold the router steady and turn it off
8. Wait for the router come to a complete stop
9. Lift the router and put it aside

Carefully separate all of the pieces once the routing is complete. Remove all remnants of the double-sided tape.

Repeat the Dado Cutting Process on the Other Side

Return to Page 11 and the paragraph titled *Place a Pattern on a Side*. This time use the Side 2 pattern and proceed as before.

NOTE: When you are told in Step 1 on Page 19 to "Carefully place the router bit at the upper right", the reference to "upper right" is still correct even though the pattern is now a mirror image of the dados cut earlier.

Check the Alignment of the Dados

The dados that you've cut in the two sides should agree identically. Sandwich the two Sides together to see if they do. I used two clamps to do this as shown in Figure 10.



Figure 10. Two Sides Sandwiched Together to Check Dado Agreement

You can see that the Sides in Figure 10 have already been milled with rounded corners and edges. We haven't gotten that far yet, so ignore those features for now.

Figure 11 shows two close-ups of the ends of the cuts. Notice that the ends of the Sides are closely aligned, and the edges of both cuts are very closely aligned. This is ideal and what you should see in your results. If there is a misalignment of the cuts, the Sides might still be usable. But be aware that too much misalignment will result in a crooked assembly. *You should remake one or both of your Sides if your cuts are too badly misaligned.*



Figure 11. Close-ups of Cuts Showing All Edges in Alignment

Drilling the Holes

A trick will be used for drilling the holes in the Sides. It's difficult to drill a clean 1 1/2" hole, so use a template to help.

MAKING THE TEMPLATE: Select a piece of 1/4" MDF maybe 12" square. Use a 1 1/2" hole saw to cut a hole in its center. Be carefully that the edges of the hole are as clean and smooth as possible. Sand off any rough or loose debris around the edges of the hole. Lay the template aside.

Now use a 1 3/8" hole saw to cut the hole in each of the Sides. You can minimize tear-out by first cutting partially through from one side and then turn the piece over and cut the remainder of the hole from the other side.

Place some double-sided tape on one of the Sides on both sides of the hole. Center the 1 1/2" hole in the template over the 1 3/8" hole in the Side and press the template against the tape. Now use a flush-cutting router bit to finish the hole in the Side while the bearing of the bit rides against the hole in the template.

Remove the template from the Side and remove all remnants of the tape.

Repeat the routing process for the hole in the other Side.

Milling the Corners

A convenient way to mill the 1/4" radiuses on the corners is to use a template like the one shown in Figure 12. It's a rectangular piece of 1/4" MDF with a small alignment guide glued on each of two edges. The guides form a lip below the bottom of the template and they're either flush to the top or sit below the top. The corner has been formed into a 1/4" radius.

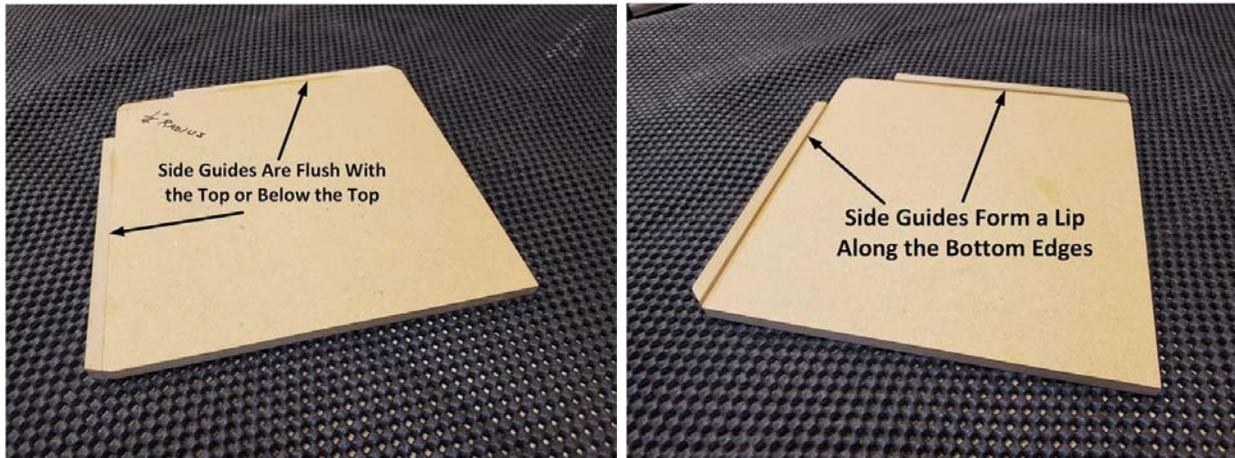


Figure 12. A Template for Cutting Rounded Corners

Place the template on top of your workpiece and press the guides firmly and squarely against the edges of the workpiece so that the rounded corner of the template is centered exactly with the corner of the workpiece.

This small template is best used with a router table. Simply use a flush-cutting router bit with a bearing to follow the edge of the template and cut the rounded corner onto the workpiece.

The template should be bigger if you use a handheld router so that you will have room to use a pair of clamps without interfering with the router's base.

GRAIN DIRECTION: Be conscious of the direction of rotation of the router. You can minimize tear-out by ensuring that the cutting edge of the bit cuts with the grain, not against it. Simply flip the workpiece over if the bit would cut against the grain.

Cut a radius on each corner of both Sides. Cut a radius on only the top corners of the Back and Base.

Milling the 1/8" Round-overs On the Edges

I prefer to use a router table to cut the 1/8" round-overs along the edges, but you might want to use a handheld router.

Set a 1/8" round-over bit in your router or router table. Use a piece of scrap to check the height adjustment of the bit to ensure a good cut.

Cut along all of the edges of both Sides, including the holes. Do not cut the edges of the dados; those must remain sharp.

Cut along only the top edges of the Base and Back. The cuts should include the top edges, the 1/4" corners, and a very small distance beyond the corners. Do not cut too far beyond the corners so the rounding won't enter into the dados when the Napkin Holder is assembled. Use Figure 13 as a reference.

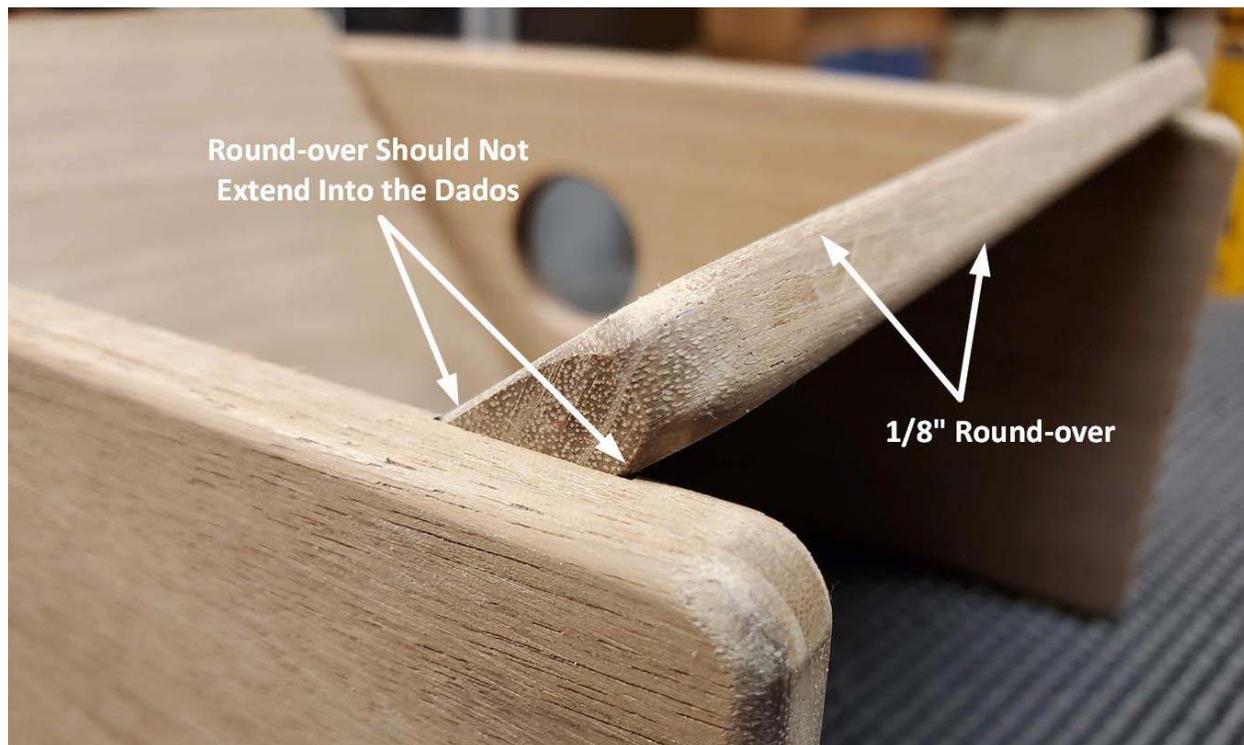


Figure 13. Limit Round-overs Past the Corners On the Back and Base

Milling the Bottom Edge of the Base

The bottom edge of the Base must be milled on both sides. Both cuts are best done on a router table. One side of the bottom edge receives a 1/4" round-over. Mill this round-over first. The other side of the same edge receives a shallow, 1/16" deep rabbet cut 3/8" wide. Mill the rabbet second. The *Base* page of the SketchUp/PDF file makes these details clear.

Dry Fit

Attempt to fit all of the pieces together. Make corrections as needed:

1. Ensure that the Back and Base fit into their respective dados. If they're too thick to fit, sanding is needed. Sand evenly across the entire workpiece with 180-grit paper so that you don't upset the sanding that you did on Page 9.
2. Verify that when the Base is placed in the dado intended for it, the lip of its rabbet aligns with the edge of the other dado as shown in Figure 14. Use some 180-grid paper to sand off some of the bottom edge of the Base if the edge of the rabbet is higher than the edge of the dado.
3. Lay one Side on a flat surface such as a benchtop, with the dados facing up
4. Place the Back and Base into their respective dados making sure that the bottom of the Back fits all the way into the rabbet on the Base
5. Align the dados of the other Side with the Back and Base and ensure the Back and Base are fully inserted into the dados
6. Carefully, using both hands, tilt the whole assembly and place it on the benchtop just the way it will be when it's in use
7. Ensure that the entire assembly can rest on a flat surface without rocking too badly. A little bit of rocking can be tolerated. Too much rocking might require you to replace one or more components.

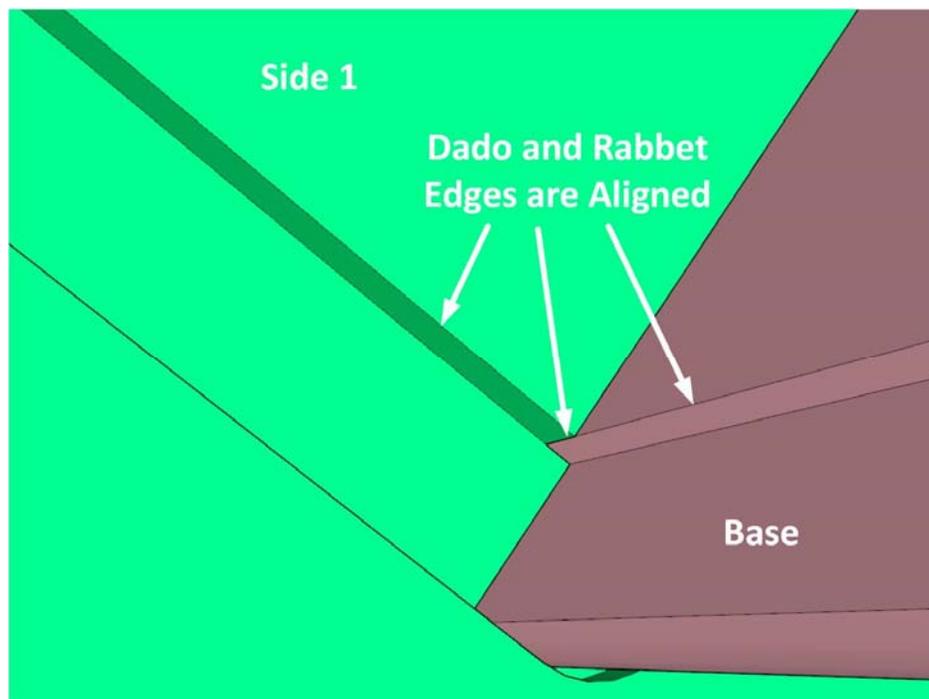


Figure 14. Note How the Edge of the Rabbet Aligns with the Edge of the Dado

Gluing and Final Assembly

The Problem with Glue

It's time to glue and assemble all of the pieces once you're satisfied with the dry fit. But glue can bring problems.

A clear shellac finish on walnut darkens the wood and enhances the grain. Beautiful! But any glue left on the surface will show up as a light-colored area and detract from your hard work.

A useful trick for avoiding stains due to glue squeeze-out is to apply painter's tape immediately next to each glued joint. Look at Figure 15 to see how this was done.



Figure 15. Taping Before Gluing

The tape on the Back and Base in Figure 15 was applied after fitting each into its respective dado and with the bottom edge of the Back fitted into the rabbet in the Base.

When squeeze-out does occur, it will collect on the tape. Simply remove the tape (together with any glue squeeze-out) once the joints are glued and securely clamped. The sooner the tape is removed, the better.

When You Remove the Tape

I used blue painter's tape when I taped the joints. Many of the wood fibers were raised when I removed the tape. Some of the surfaces where the tape had been actually felt fuzzy.

More sanding is needed using 180-grit paper where any tape was removed. You don't want the raised fibers to be there when you apply the finish.

Rehearse the Gluing Process Without Glue

You should do a dry run to make sure you're prepared before applying glue. Have four clamps ready to go. I suggest using two clamps to span from one side to the other across the top, one to span from one side to the other across the bottom, and one clamp spanning from the top of the Base to the bottom of the Base and partially engaging the Back. The last clamp ensures that the gap between the edge of the rabbet in the base is snug against the surface of the Back.

Dry assemble the pieces this way:

1. Lay one Side on a flat surface such as a benchtop, with the dados facing up
2. Place the Back and Base into their respective dados making sure that the bottom of the Back fits all the way into the rabbet in the Base
3. Align the dados of the other Side with the Back and Base and ensure the Back and Base are fully inserted into the dados
4. Carefully, using both hands, tilt the whole assembly and place it on the benchtop just the way it will be when it's in use
5. Place two clamps from side to side so that the clamps press the Sides where the Back and Base are located
6. Pick up the assembly and add a third clamp from side to side so that the clamp presses near the place where the Back and Base meet
7. Pick up the assembly again and place a fourth clamp from the top of the Base to the bottom of the Base so that the clamp's pad at the bottom also presses against the Back

Now unclamp and disassemble all of the components. Put all of the clamps and parts in convenient places nearby.

Avoid Stress by Gluing Up Only Part of the Project

I sometimes avoid gluing an entire project at once. That way I'm not too stressed trying to get everything together, aligned, and clamped before the glue begins to set.

Here's how gluing up only part of the project works. Have your glue ready:

1. Lay one Side on a flat surface such as a benchtop, dados facing up
2. Lay a thin string of glue into the dado that will accept the Base; do not put the glue close to the ends of the dado
3. Pick up the Base and put a thin string of glue *ONLY* on the edge that will go into the dado, not the other edge; do not put the glue close to the rounded corner
4. Put another thin string of glue on the rabbet; don't put the glue close to the ends
5. Use a small brush, a Q-tip, or your finger to spread out the thin strings of glue in the dado and on the two edges of the Base; don't spread the glue too close to the ends; remove any excess glue
6. Insert the Base fully into the dado and be sure that the edge of the rabbet is flush with the edge of the dado
7. Put a thin string of glue into the other dado on the Side
8. Pick up the Back and put a thin string of glue *ONLY* on the edge that will go into the dado
9. Put another thin string of glue on the end that will engage with the rabbet in the Base
10. Spread out the thin strings in the dado and on both of the glued edges of the Back
11. Insert the Back fully into its dado and be sure that the Base is fully seated in the rabbet on the Base
12. *APPLY NO MORE GLUE AT THIS TIME*; the exposed edges of the Back and Base, and the dados in the other Side should not have any glue in them
13. Align the dados of the other Side with the Back and Base and ensure the Back and Base are inserted into the dados
14. Carefully, using both hands, tilt the whole assembly and place it on the benchtop just the way it will be when it's in use
15. Place two clamps from side to side so that the clamps press the sides near where the Back and Base are located
16. Pick up the assembly and add a third clamp from side to side so that the clamp presses near the place where the Back and Base meet

17. Pick up the assembly again and place a fourth clamp from the top of the Base to the bottom of the Base so that the clamp pad at the bottom also presses against the Back
18. Ensure that all of the edges are seated snugly in the dados, and the Back is snugly seated in the rabbet in the Base
19. Carefully wipe away any excess glue squeeze-out along the joints

You now have a condition in which everything is glued except the joints between the other Side and the Back and Base. But, because all of the parts have been assembled, everything is in the correct alignment while the glue cures.

Wait at least 20 minutes for the glue to begin curing. (This assumes that you are using Titebond III. Another type of glue could require more time.)

Use the available time to remove the tape next to the glued joints being careful not to allow any glue squeeze-out that's on the tape to touch any bare wood. Don't allow your fingers to touch any bare wood if you get wet glue on them.

Once at least 20 minutes have passed, remove the clamps and place the assembly with the glued Side down against the workbench.

1. Carefully remove the unglued Side without disturbing the glued joints
2. Apply a string of glue inside both dados
3. Apply a string of glue along the exposed edges of the Back and Base
4. Spread out the glue
5. Place the Side back onto the Back and Base and clamp as before
6. Ensure that all of the edges are seated snugly in the dados
7. Clamp as before
8. Carefully wipe away any excess glue squeeze-out along the joints

Let the entire assembly cure for another 20 minutes before proceeding.

Again, use the available time to remove the tape as before.

Remove the clamps once you're satisfied that the glue has cured sufficiently

Apply a Finish

What Type of Finish?

I used clear spray-on shellac. It's easy to apply and it brings out the color and grain of the wood. Plus, shellac is inherently food safe. This is a reference describing shellac and its food-safe characteristic:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shellac>

It's argued that all wood finishes that dry to a hard film are food safe after they've been given time to cure. This is a YouTube video describing the use of food around wood finishes:

https://youtu.be/m3orVP3pZ_k

Various finish types might work well on the Napkin Holder, but I chose Zinsser *Bulls Eye Shellac, Clear* in a spray can. The description that follows assumes the use of this Zinsser finish.

Preparation

Carefully sand any rough spots and burn marks using 180-grit paper. Ensure that any fuzziness that occurred when the tape was removed is also removed or minimized.

Brush off all sawdust and debris using a dry brush. Then wipe all surfaces with a tack cloth to remove any fine dust.

Apply the First Coat

Place the Napkin Holder upside down in the place where it will be sprayed.

Apply overlapping spray to all exposed surfaces, ensuring there are no dry areas and no drips. It can be helpful to add more spray here or there to ensure good coverage.

Wait about 20 minutes. Then check for minimal tackiness such that you won't leave fingerprints in the finish when you pick up the assembly.

Turn the Napkin Holder over and place it on painter's points (or, painter's pyramids) or across a pair of dowels. This will prevent any large surface contact between the still-tacky finish and any other surface.

Once again, apply overlapping spray to all exposed surfaces, ensuring there are no drips and no dry areas. It can be helpful to add more spray here or there to ensure good coverage.

Preparation for the Second Coat

Allow plenty of time for the first coat to cure properly. You'll want it to cure enough so that you won't experience "corning" when you sand the surfaces. "Corning" is the accumulation of little balls of finish on your sandpaper. These can damage the surface that you're trying to protect. Here's a YouTube video that describes corning.

<https://youtu.be/bA8QT3bW8B4>

The first coat will leave a surface that's rough or bumpy. Lightly sand all surfaces using 600-grit paper until the surfaces are all smooth to the touch. Just sand lightly, avoiding sanding all the way through the first coat of shellac.

Brush off the dust and then use a tack cloth to wipe down all surfaces.

Apply the Second Coat

Repeat the same process that you used when applying the first coat.

Let the second coat cure for a day or longer before putting the Napkin Holder to use.