

Build an Oak Bookcase

From Getting Started in Woodworking, Season 2

BY ASA CHRISTIANA

You can thank Mike Pekovich, Fine Woodworking's art director, for designing this simple but stylish bookcase. He took a straightforward form--an oak bookcase with dado and rabbet joints--and added nice proportions and elegant curves.

We agreed that screws would reinforce the joints nicely, and that gave us a design option on the sides. Choose oak plugs, and align the grain carefully, and the plugs disappear. Make them from a contrasting wood, like walnut, and the rows of plugs add a nice design feature to the broad sides, hinting at the construction in a subtle way.

By design the bookcase contains a number of fundamental lessons for would-be furniture-makers, and like the other projects in this video series, the whole thing can be built with just a few portable power tools: a circular saw, a drill, and a router.

The shelves attach to the sides with simple dadoes, and the back and back-splash drop into rabbets. Screws reinforce the dado joints and also attach the lower stretcher, and wood plugs cover the screw holes. Smaller wood screws are used to attach the plywood back.

Curves add life to rectangular pieces of furniture, and Pekovich worked in three types, each irregular and organic (as opposed to radius curves that can seem mechanical). At the top are gentle curves that speed up as they move forward, each taken from a section of a French curve. At the bottom are two long curves formed with a flexible wood batten, one extending end to end on the lower stretcher, and the other a short graceful arch at the bottom of the sides, ending at a straight step at each end to suggest legs.

--Asa Christiana, editor, *Fine Woodworking*



LUMBER AND HARDWARE LIST

PART	QTY	SIZE	MATERIAL
SIDES	2	3/4 in. x 11 in. x 52 in.	Oak
SHELVES	5	3/4 in. x 10 5/8 in. x 27 in.	Oak
BACK SPLASH	1	3/4 in. x 3 1/4 in. x 27 1/2 in.	Oak
ARCHED STRETCHER	1	3/4 in. x 3 in. x 26 1/2 in.	Oak
BACK	1	1/4 in. x 27 1/2 in. x 45 3/4 in.	Oak veneer plywood
SCREWS FOR SHELVES	30	#12 x 2 in. flat head screws	Steel
SCREWS FOR BACK	24	#6 x 3/4 in. flat head screws	Steel



VIDEOS

Go to [FineWoodworking.com/Start](https://www.finewoodworking.com/Start) to watch a multi-part video detailing how to build this bookcase from start to finish.

