



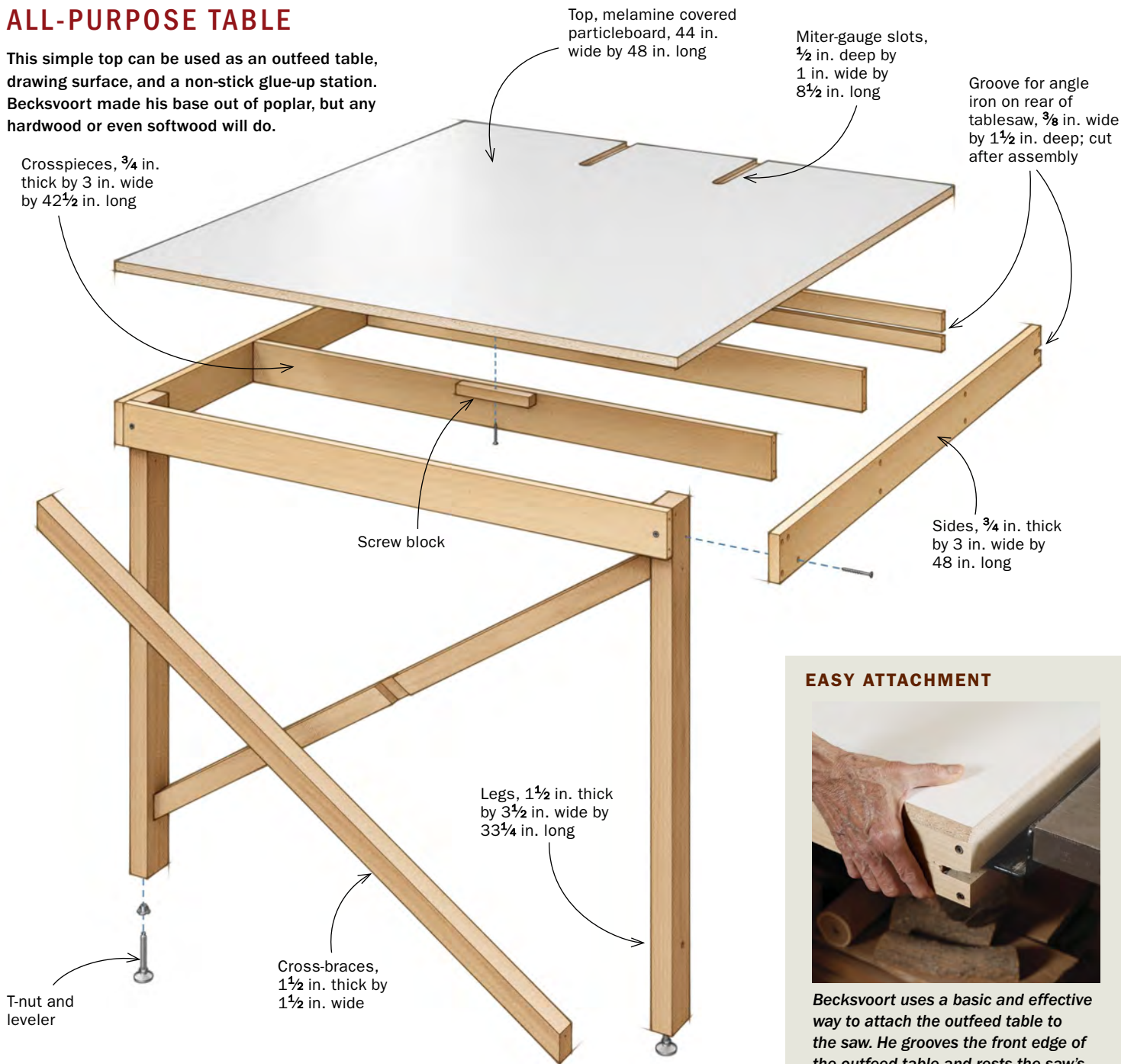
Basic Outfeed Table

Durable, versatile, and easy to build

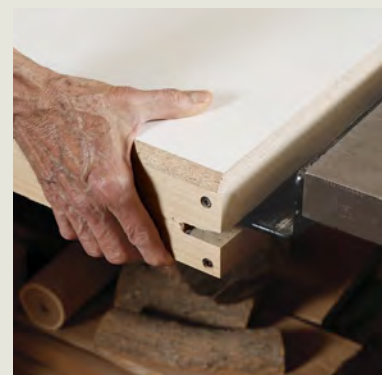
BY CHRISTIAN BECKSVOORT

ALL-PURPOSE TABLE

This simple top can be used as an outfeed table, drawing surface, and a non-stick glue-up station. Becksvoort made his base out of poplar, but any hardwood or even softwood will do.



EASY ATTACHMENT



Becksvoort uses a basic and effective way to attach the outfeed table to the saw. He grooves the front edge of the outfeed table and rests the saw's angle iron in the groove.

If you own a tablesaw and make anything bigger than miniatures, you really need an outfeed table. There are plenty of articles on making outfeed tables equipped with a variety of cubbyholes, doors, and drawers. That's a great idea, especially if you're in need of additional storage space and have the extra time to devote. However, if you just want a quick, dependable, and versatile alternative, I have one. The simplest outfeed table is nothing more than a flat surface and two legs. It shouldn't take more than a few hours to build and will serve you for decades.

Your choice of materials for the top adds to the versatility of this outfeed table. My first two choices are $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood covered

with Formica, or melamine-faced particleboard. I often use mine for assembly, and dried glue pops right off these surfaces. I'd go with white, off white, or light gray because I also use my outfeed table as a whiteboard to lay out angles or draw full-size details. Pencil wipes off easily.

Size your table to fit your needs

You don't have to build your outfeed table to the same dimensions as mine. Decide on the width and length of the tabletop based on your saw, what kind of work you do, and how much room you have in your shop. The cast-iron top of my tablesaw

Start at the top

A simple frame. Once the outer frame is screwed together, add two internal supports. A wooden hand-screw clamp keeps the parts aligned for pre-drilling and screwing.



is 44 in. wide, so that's the width I chose to make my outfeed table. If you have room to the right of the saw and work with lots of sheet goods, feel free to make the table wider. For me, 48 in. is a convenient length. Added to the 30 in. of the saw table itself, that gives me more than 6 ft. of flat surface to work on.

Build the frame first, then add the top

Start by making a frame out of $\frac{3}{4}$ -in.-thick by 3-in.-wide hardwood. The corners can be nailed, rabbeted, screwed, glued, or even dovetailed. I use screws. For my size table, once the frame is together I add two internal crosspieces, roughly 15 in. apart, for added strength. These can be screwed in place from the outside of the frame. Sight across the top of the frame to be sure that the entire top is in the same plane.

If you are using plywood or MDF for the top, cut the piece to size and glue, nail, or screw it to the frame. Now glue on the Formica surface. If you are working with sheet material with a factory-applied melamine surface, just glue and clamp the panel to the frame.

The outfeed table can be attached to the saw in one of two ways. If your saw has an angle-iron fence system front and back, cut a groove along the leading edge of the outfeed table's frame. I cut it on the tablesaw with the tabletop standing on end, using a dado blade, a featherboard, and a high fence. If the saw table has no angle iron, you can bolt the outfeed table to the flange of the saw table. Next, cut two slots into the top aligned with your saw's miter-gauge slots.



Attach the top. The top gets glued and clamped to the frame. If you are using a sheet with melamine on both sides, make sure to scuff-sand where the glue will be applied. Because there's no way to apply clamp pressure at the center of the tabletop, Becksvoort glues a cleat to the supports, and then predrills and screws through the cleats into the underside of the top.



Cut a groove for mounting

Locate and rip.

Use an adjustable square to measure the distance from the surface of the tablesaw to the top of the angle iron. Because you want the outfeed table to lie a bit below the saw table, retract the square's blade $\frac{1}{16}$ in. to mark for the groove. With a tall auxiliary fence and a featherboard to support the top, Becksvoort uses a dado blade to cut a groove in the frame's front edge for the angle iron to rest in. Avoid the screws in the corners.



Measure from the edge of the tablesaw to locate the slots. Cutting the slots with a 1-in. router bit gives me a bit of leeway when aligning them to the tablesaw's $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. miter slots.

Move on to the leg assembly

Once the top is made and the slots are cut, add the two legs. They are easy to make from $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick by $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide stock, cut about 1 in. shorter than the distance from the underside of the top to the floor. Undersizing them gives you space to add T-nuts and levelers. Drill the appropriate size hole into the bottom of each leg, insert the T-nut, and then thread in the levelers. I get mine from Rockler (nos. 49869 and 24315).

The legs are attached into the far corners of the table, clamped and then screwed through the frame from the outside. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in. edge goes to the end, with the $3\frac{1}{2}$ -in. face parallel to the sides. If your frame parts were cut square, the legs should stand plumb. Two $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in.-thick by $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in. wide pieces are used diagonally as cross-braces between the legs. With the table upside down, I locate the top end of the cross-braces to rest just above the underside of the frame. I use a half-lap



Continue the tablesaw's miter slots. Locate the slots by taking measurements off the tablesaw and drawing them on the outfeed table. Using a 1-in. router bit builds in some forgiveness when aligning to the saw's $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. miter slots.

Attach the legs



Make legs and add cross-braces. Before you screw the leg in place, drill and tap in a T-nut and add a leveler to the bottom of each leg. These will help you level the outfeed table to the saw table. Mark the first cross-brace in place (bottom right), cut it to length, and screw it to the legs.



joint at the intersection for stability, and screw the cross-braces between the legs.

Attach the outfeed table to the saw

If your tablesaw has angle iron, turn the outfeed table right side up, and slide the groove at the front edge onto the angle iron at the rear of the saw. I leave the table loose, so I can slide it along the angle iron if I need to get around the table for a glue-up. But most of the time it just rests in place with its miter-gauge slots aligned with the miter slots on the tablesaw.

If your saw has no angle iron, drill two holes through the wood frame, put the outfeed table in place, clamp or shim it to align the miter-gauge slots, and transfer the holes in the wood frame to the flange of the table-saw. Drill two $\frac{5}{16}$ -in.-dia. holes through the flange. The cast iron drills pretty easily. Use $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. bolts and nuts to attach the outfeed table to the saw.

Finally, use a long straightedge to be sure that the outfeed table is a smidge below the saw table, and raise or lower the support legs to align the two surfaces. This ensures that whatever you're cutting won't catch as it passes from saw table to outfeed table. □

Contributing editor Christian Becksvoort is a professional furniture maker in New Gloucester, Maine.



The second brace gets a half-lap. After marking the cross-braces to each other, use a handsaw and chisel to remove half the thickness of the second cross-brace (below). Attach that brace to the legs and the first cross-brace.



Level it up



Sight and set. Use a long straightedge to sight along the length of the tablesaw top and the outfeed tabletop. The front edge of the outfeed table should sit just below the tablesaw top. Set the levelers accordingly. The levelers have a square or hex head just above the pad. Use a crescent wrench to adjust them up or down as needed.