

# Handcrafting Dovetail Drawers

This procedural guide describes the steps to create strong and durable dovetail drawers by hand.

Emphasizing a traditional approach, it focuses on meticulously crafting the dovetail joint to ensure the quality and longevity of the drawers.

## Step 1: **Materials**

Gather all necessary materials including wood boards for the drawer sides, front, and back, a saw, chisels, a mallet, a marking gauge, a dovetail marker, wood glue, clamps, a square, sandpaper, and a workbench.

## Step 2: **Dimensioning**

Measure and cut the wood boards to the desired dimensions for your drawer. Ensure that all pieces are square and have flat surfaces.

## Step 3: **Marking**

Use the marking gauge to set the thickness of the drawer sides. Mark the depth of the dovetails on the ends of the front and back pieces of the drawer.

## Step 4: **Sawing**

With a dovetail saw, carefully cut along the marked lines for the dovetails. Make sure to cut on the waste side of the line and keep the saw cuts straight.

## Step 5: **Chiseling**

Remove the waste material between the dovetails using a sharp chisel and mallet. Work gradually, chipping away small amounts at a time for accuracy.

## Step 6: **Test Fit**

Dry fit the pieces together to check the precision of your dovetails. Make fine adjustments with the chisel if necessary, ensuring a snug, square fit.

## Step 7: **Gluing**

Apply a moderate amount of wood glue to the dovetails. Assemble the drawer, making sure all joints are tight and the drawer is square.

## Step 8: **Clamping**

Clamp the drawer together using woodworking clamps. Wipe away any excess glue with a damp cloth and let the glue set according to the manufacturer's instructions.

## Step 9: **Finishing**

Once the glue has dried, remove the clamps. Sand the drawer to remove any sharp edges or uneven surfaces. Finish the drawer with the desired stain or protective coating.

# **General Notes**

## **Safety**

Always practice safety when using sharp tools. Wear appropriate safety gear such as safety glasses and follow all workshop safety instructions.

## **Wood Selection**

Choose hardwoods like oak, walnut, or maple for the best strength and appearance of your dovetail drawers.

## **Grain Direction**

Pay attention to the direction of the wood grain when marking and cutting dovetails to ensure the best fit and avoid splitting the wood.