



Issue 9, March

Hi Steve r,

Curiously, we tend to assign the good variety of luck to others: “He’s lucky to have such a huge workshop” while turning “bad luck” inward: “I have really bad luck making miters.” We mostly use these terms just as figurative expressions, not literally suggesting that there are leprechauns, black cats, or other supernatural powers at work. But what we’re really doing is downplaying hard work and dedication in favor of coincidence.

Sure, coincidence plays a part in everyone’s life. Most likely, it was through a series of unpredictable events and life experiences that you became interested in woodworking. That’s just how the universe works, yet coincidence can only be observed in hindsight.

What’s far more exciting and rewarding is self-reliance and responsibility: setting specific goals and using our brains to achieve them. This is something we all have the power to control.

The basic concepts of woodworking are very simple: you cut and shape boards and assemble them to create something new. The challenge lies in choosing which techniques you will use and how you can perfect them. There is no reason why you can’t become adept at whatever form of woodworking you do. This is a level playing field.



Once you understand what you'd like to accomplish, luck is irrelevant. The reality is that you have to work at it. That might mean learning new skills or refining old ones. If you want to hand-cut dovetails, it probably means putting in the reps. Getting that mind/muscle connection active by working at it over and over. Once you become reasonably good at those dovetails, other challenges will present themselves.

For those of us who favor power tools, there's still a need for developing muscle memory and refining those brain synapses, but we might focus a little more on improving our tools to accomplish tasks more efficiently or more accurately. Maybe we'll make a miter sled for the table saw. Or improve the one we have. All of this will require conscious effort and time.

Do you have woodworking goals? If not, set some, then dedicate yourself to achieving them without excuses. Oh, and let's try to put Luck's cousin, Wish, on a time-out while we're at it. It's far more rewarding to make things happen yourself instead of wishing for luck.

Have a great month,

Steve

Essential Shop Jigs

I'm starting a new collection of essential shop jigs every woodworker needs to make. It's an ongoing series of detailed videos and plans. So far, I've got two things in this collection. (Do two things constitute a collection? lol) Anyway, I'm posting [them all here](#) and will be updating them as often as possible. I've got a simple crosscut sled

coming up next. I want this to grow into a definitive resource for woodworkers. I'll keep you posted when new stuff is added!



Community Highlight

Getting in the zone

As I referenced in my note above, luck won't help us overcome obstacles. Instead, we must be dedicated and put in the work.

Bill, a loyal viewer and 32 year veteran of the Canadian Forces, wrote in to share his story about how woodworking has given him the opportunity to escape his PTSD, anxiety, and short-term memory issues and “get in the zone”. While focusing on a project he is able to calm his mind and think about nothing but the next cut he needs to make.

My hope is that you, too, are able to “get in the zone” and enjoy all of the benefits of woodworking. Whether you are escaping from stress or just trying to have fun, let the craft bring you joy, inspiration, and even sometimes a few laughs.

This Month's Member Projects

Check out these unique projects built by a few of our [Weekend Workshop](#) members!



Side-table Success

I love the design of Randy's mixed-material table—interesting shapes, thick top, great proportions, and wonderful color contrast. When you are building any project, always be on the lookout for a special feature or element you can include to make it unique.

I can't wait to see what he makes in [Powered Up](#).



Extra-special BMW+

Sure, the BMW+ is a fun way to upgrade the Basic Mobile Workbench, but wow, I think we can call Kara's retirement gift for her dad, a BMW ++.

I hope your dad isn't afraid to beat it up! (At least a little bit!)



Simple Bed Build

This is one of my favorite bed designs because it looks great and can be made with just a circular saw and a drill. I love the cheerful colors that Claude, also a member of [The Weekend Woodworker](#), chose for his son's bed!

Thanks for reading,

- Steve

P.S. If you are new this month, you can read last month's issue of Notes From the Shop [here](#).

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