

Issue 19, January 2022

Hi Steve R,

Happy New Year!

More people than ever decided to take up woodworking over the past two years, and I'm grateful that many of you have taken your first steps with [The Weekend Woodworker](#) course. I'm proud that it's still the best, most user-friendly system for learning woodworking available.

Over the past month, I heard from several people who told me they're making New Year resolutions to actually get serious and start building things in 2022. One guy said he bought my course in June, equipped a space with tools, built a [BMW](#), and then "Life got in the way and I haven't had time to build anything else."

If you struggle with this, here's some advice:

Stop convincing yourself that you "don't have time". This is an offhand excuse we use to forgive ourselves for not doing something. It could be something with serious repercussions, like not filing your taxes; something relatively important, like putting off changing the oil in your car; or something we actually enjoy, like not pursuing our hobby.

The fact is, most of us *actually do have the time*. We seem to find plenty to spare for low-effort activities such as playing video games, watching TV, or endless scrolling through social media. But the most satisfying and rewarding activities require effort.

You may have started your woodworking hobby like gangbusters. You researched tools, made purchases, read books, watched tons of how-to videos, and set up a small workspace in the garage. Well, that's the low-effort stuff. Actually building things takes time, planning, and effort.

So find a simple project you're interested in building and familiarize yourself with all the steps it will take to complete it. Have a clear understanding of everything you need to do to build it and make sure you have all the lumber you need.

Now add shop time into your schedule for a month. Literally, put it on your calendar for one to two hours every Saturday or Sunday. And stick to it. No excuses.

Once you start working, you may discover that you want to spend longer than the time you allotted. Hey, if you're in the groove, go for it. The idea here is to establish a pattern of fun, focused, and productive effort that you can reproduce every week. It's to remind yourself why you got interested in woodworking in the first place.

After a month of this routine, you may not have to keep scheduling your shop time. You've probably completed a project and now you'll probably start sneaking into the shop any free moment you have. It'll become a positive habit that affects the reward center of your brain.

Just like working out at a gym, personal growth as a woodworker is all about getting in the reps. The more time you spend in the shop building things, the more you'll see results. Schedule time to build those woodworking muscles!

Hope you have a great 2022!

Steve



## Ready to step up your woodworking?

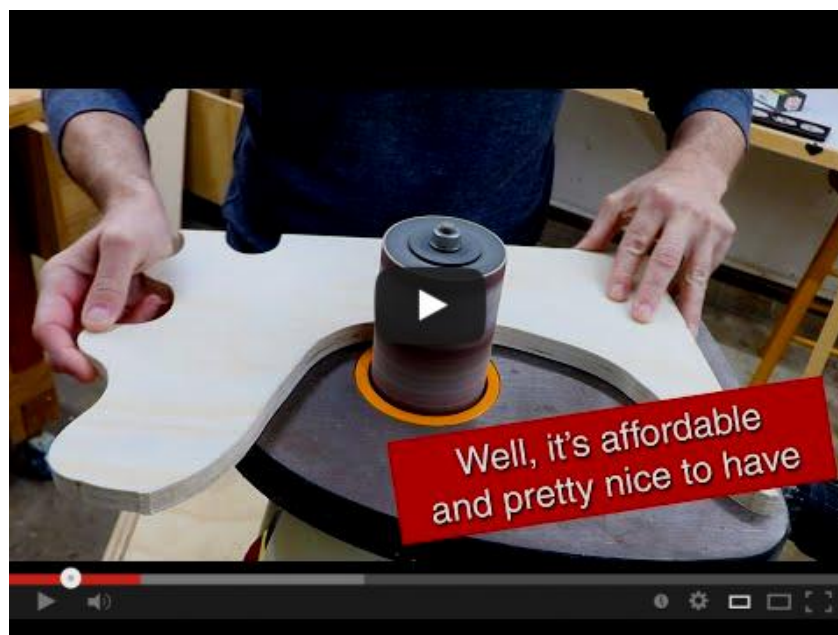
Try these 2 tools

If you started woodworking last year and are thinking about ways to improve your skills, I recently posted videos taking a look at two "next level" tools that you might consider.

First is a **drill press**. There will be times in your woodworking that you need to drill holes that are absolutely perpendicular to the wood. This is just one of many uses for a drill press. (*Mine is a 20 year old Ryobi model, but [this one](#) is comparable.*)



Second, I absolutely love my **oscillating spindle sander**. It's inexpensive and an efficient way to sand inside curves. (*I have a Shop Fox sander, but [this one](#) is identical and half the price.*)



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## Small changes for big impact

Quick shout-out to my buddy Ethan who makes some of the most useful videos on YouTube. This recent video is an excellent example of something small that professional carpenters do that can impact how we build. Check it out.



For more drilling tips check out [my new three-minute video](#).

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## Community Highlight

### Customize your ride

One (of the many) great things about woodworking is the ability to customize things you build to fit your wants and needs. This is especially true in the shop.

When getting started with woodworking or refreshing your shop for the new year, I encourage you to think about how you can customize your workspace to enhance your workflow.

Here's a look at the fun additions, changes, and expansions members of my courses have made to the Basic Mobile Workbench (BMW), a bonus project at the beginning of [The Weekend Woodworker](#). A fancy version, the BMW+, can be found in [The Weekend Workshop](#).



Free BMW plans can be found [here](#) and a full step-by-step video guide to building the project is included in *The Weekend Woodworker*.

Looking for other ways to optimize your shop? Check out [The Weekend Workshop](#).

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## This Month's Member Projects

Here are a few of the awesome projects members of [The Weekend Workshop](#) and [The Weekend Woodworker](#) made recently!



### Plinko for the win!

Last month I posted a project video demonstrating how to create a Plinko board, and Angie ran with it!

I love the changes she made to the game that she gifted her husband for Christmas and the paint job is fantastic!



## Scrapbot 2.0

This is such a fun way to use up some scrap lumber. Introducing Eric's Scrapbot 2.0!



## First table success

Oh wow, check out Meredith's first table! This is gorgeous.

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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