

# Building a Storage Chest Made Easy

No. 21



DO IT YOURSELF INSTRUCTION LEAFLET



"This brochure will give you a guide to building a timber Storage Chest. For all materials, tools and any further help or advice you may want, just come and see us at Home.

Get the Know-How



# Building A Storage Chest Made Easy

## Where to start

A storage chest can be a real treasure chest, performing a wealth of roles and functions. First and foremost, it can be a godsend in solving ever increasing storage woes.

It is ideal for linens, bulky bedding, out of season clothing or as a general toy depository in the war against those pintsize human tornadoes. Alternatively, it would be well appreciated in a sewing room for storing patterns and materials, or even for more heavy duty storage such as firewood, or as a way to keep boots tidy near a doorway.

But a storage chest is also a versatile piece of furniture, often used as a casual seat or even as a coffee table.

Whatever it's used for, rest assured it's not a job that requires any serious carpentry skills.

## Tools Required

We've designed a chest which is 900mm long x 530mm wide x 530mm high. But the builder may set individual dimensions depending upon needs. The job requires: a wide variety of tools, starting with a power or handsaw, power drills and bits, power sander and sandpaper, plus a plane, nail punch and hammer, measuring tape, pencil and ruler.

If fitting hinges, a chisel and a screwdriver will be required.

Choose from butt, strap or long piano type hinges and be sure also to have screws and bullet head nails on hand.

## Materials required

Basically, battens and lining boards are the main materials to build a chest. Buy pieces that are sufficient to be cut to the required size. Alternatively, many timber merchants will cut to the exact measurement for a charge.

We've chosen to use radiata pine, but many other timbers would be just as suitable and offer a different look altogether. The bottom, sides and lid are designed to be made from tongue and groove lining boards for easy construction.

140mm lining boards 12mm thick. Ends: 8x 506mm long. Side: 8 x 900mm long. Bottom: 4 x 876mm long. Top: 4 x 900mm long. 42mm x 19mm battens (dressed pine) 8 x 434mm (vertical for sides and ends); 4 x 486mm (horizontals for ends); 4 x 876mm (horizontals for sides); 3 x 500mm (for base); 3 x 468mm (for lid).

## Step 1: The sides

The sides are quick and easy to make. For each side, cut four boards 900mm long, two battens 876mm long and three battens 430mm long.

Plane the tongues off two of the boards and the grooves off two others. Sand the edges smooth (Diagram 1).

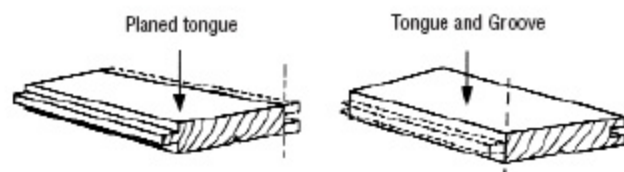


Diagram 1 Sand edges smooth

Check everything is square, then tap a set of tongue and groove boards together with the hammer.

Each side will comprise a board without a tongue, two complete boards, and a board without a groove.

Now nail a 876mm batten along each outside edge of the boards. Make sure it is flush and is 12mm in from each end. The three 434mm battens now go crossways - one at each end and one centred. Then the second 876mm batten is nailed to the bottom 12mm up (Diagram 2).

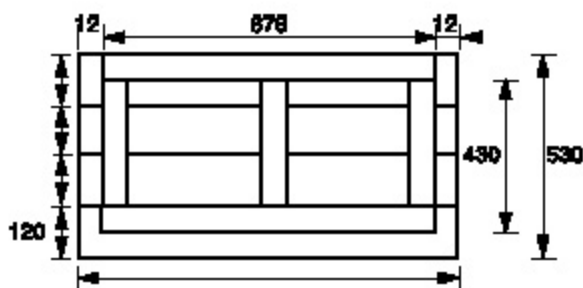


Diagram 2 The sides

## Step 2: The ends

Use four boards 506mm long to make up each end. Plane off the tongues from the top and bottom boards and make the surfaces smooth. Centre and nail a 468mm batten to the top board. Join the four boards together with a 430mm batten, then fix a 468mm batten 12mm from the bottom edge (Diagram 3).

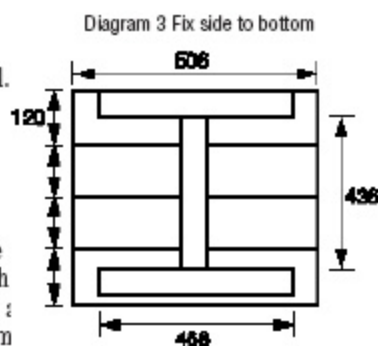


Diagram 3 Fix side to bottom

### Step 3: The bottom

To make the bottom cut four boards 876mm long. Take 18mm off the groove side of one board and 18mm off the tongue side of another board. Sand the edges smooth. Check everything is square then tap a set of tongue and groove boards together.

Nail the three 506mm battens across the boards. The two outside battens positioned 19mm in from the end and 15mm in from the side. Centre the third batten across the boards (Diagram 4)

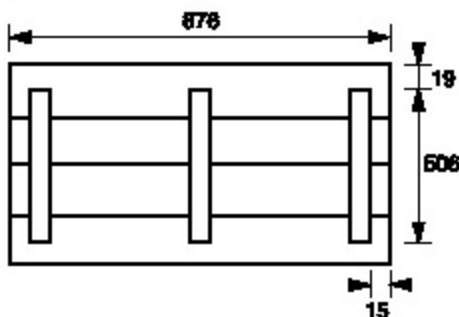


Diagram 4

### Traps to avoid

*Be careful nailing into the end of a piece of timber. It can split quite easily. Either drill a starting hole first or blast the end of the nail by hitting it with the hammer.*

*To avoid bruising the timber with the hammer, don't nail right to the surface - especially when using softwood. Leave about 3mm of the nail standing then use a nail punch to recess it below the surface.*

### Tips from the trade

*Measure carefully and accurately. It makes all the difference to the end result and it will save miscutting expensive timber. Measure twice, cut once.*

*Always plane with the grain. Don't take off too much with each sweep.*

*An easy and accurate way to cut several pieces of timber to the same length is to clamp them and measure and cut them as one.*

### Step 4: The lid

To make the lid, plane the tongue of one 900mm long board and the groove of another. Sand the edges smooth. Check everything is square then tap a set of tongue and groove boards together with the hammer.

Nail the three 460mm battens across the boards. The two end battens must be positioned 35mm in from the end of the boards and 35mm in the side edge also or the lid will not close flush (Diagram 5).

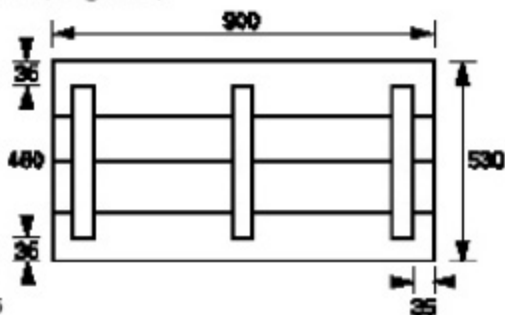


Diagram 5

### Step 5: Fix sides to ends and bottom

Now fix the sides to the ends with nails. The top edge must be flush.

Turn chest over to fit bottom into recess formed by sides and ends. Nail bottom into place. Battens on bottom should be to outside (Diagram 6).



Diagram 6 Battens to hold sides at top

Turn chest back over fit lid. It's really a repeat process of the bottom. Fit the boards together and plane off the outward-facing tongue.

Just ensure it fits over the chest snugly and will open smoothly. The edge to be lifted can have a cutaway section in the centre for easy lifting. Sand the edge smooth.

### Step 6: The hinges

Fit hinges. Choose either strap hinges, butt hinges or piano hinges.

Strap hinges are the simplest to fit; they simply screw in place. Butt hinges and piano hinges need to be recessed first with a chisel.



Diagram 7 Hinges in place

### Finishing off

The job is ready to paint or stain. But first, fill all the nail holes with a wood filler. Then lightly sand the outside to get a smooth finish (sand with the grain to avoid scratching).

A stain will bring out the natural beauty of the timber. However, if it's for one of the kids, they might prefer it painted in a bright, bold colour. Give it an enamel finish that will stand a bit of treatment and wipes clean.

To hide the bare corners nail a piece of 90° pine edge 32mm x 32mm over the corners. This gives a neat finish. Cut each piece 585mm.

## TIPS FROM THE TRADE

Measuring is easy, but materials are expensive, so double check all measurements and markings before cutting a piece of timber. When you need several pieces of timber all the same length, you can save time by clamping them together, measure once and cut all together. Even if you have been a fraction out in measuring, at least all pieces will be the same length. When fixing outside, you should always use galvanised nails/bolts as standard bright steel nails etc. will rust and cause unsightly stains on the timber-very hard to remove or hide. Always wear goggles for eye protection and ear muffs when using power tools. Follow the manufacturer's instructions when applying exterior stains and paints - short cutting will result in an inferior job.

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