

SIMPLY ROUTING

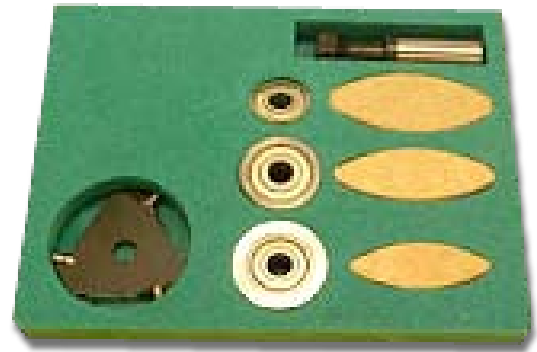
by Mark Eaton

Tips & Projects

Using Your Router as a Biscuit Joiner

Your router does even more!

I picked up a biscuit cutter set from Dimar Canada and couldn't wait to give it a try. Many applications need some form of joint to hold it together, but biscuits also make aligning your stock very easy. This kit is set up for standard #0, #10 and #20 biscuits. It comes with a 1/4" or 1/2" shank, a 5/32" slot cutter and 3 sizes of bearings for the different size biscuits, plus a sample of each biscuit.



To assemble the kit for routing, first you must choose the proper size bearing for the biscuit that you require. The largest bearing is set for the #0 biscuits; medium for #10 and small for #20. The picture at right shows how to assemble the cutter and bearing to the shaft. I will be using the #10 biscuit bearing for my cuts.



SAFETY NOTE: the nature of this cutter allows the user to possibly assemble the slot so that it will spin backwards on your router. **BE VERY CAREFUL** during assembly that the carbide will be facing you and will be turning in a counter clockwise direction in your router.



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Now that you have chucked up the cutter you must align it to the centre of your stock.

Set up your router fence and isolate your bearing flush with the edge of your fence. Using a test piece, mark the centre of your board. Now align the centre of the carbide to the centre line that you have drawn.

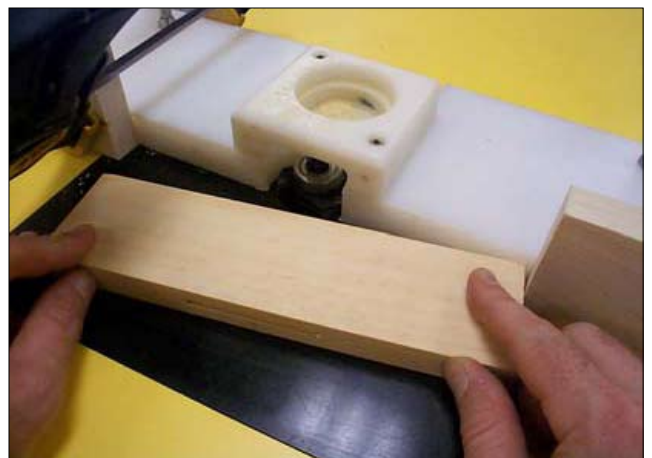
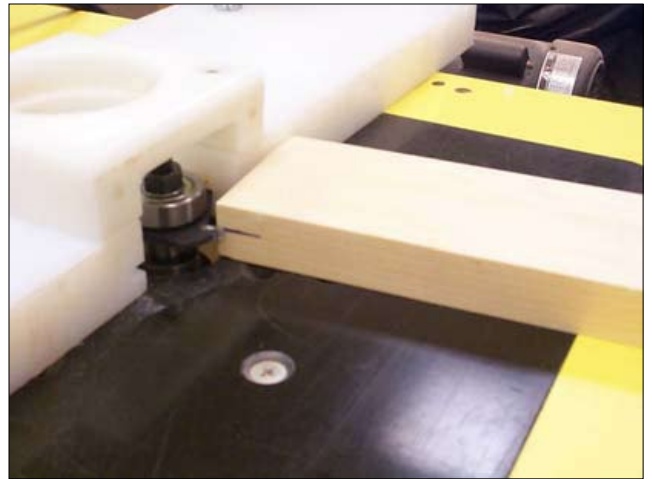
Test this set up by cutting a small groove into your stock. Next, flip the board over and check to see if the cutter goes into the slot from the other side.

If it doesn't slide right into the slot, you are half the distance off. Either raise or lower your cutter half of the distance that you are off and run another test.

Once everything lines up, you are ready to start cutting your biscuit slots. If you simply press your stock into the cutter you will find that the depth is right but the length is too short.

To compensate for this you must start your cut and then move your stock forward across the cutter to get the right length. The safest way to do this is to have stops on your fence.

Press your stock against the rear stop, pivot into the cutter – sliding the board forward to the front stop and ending with a pivot off the cutter.



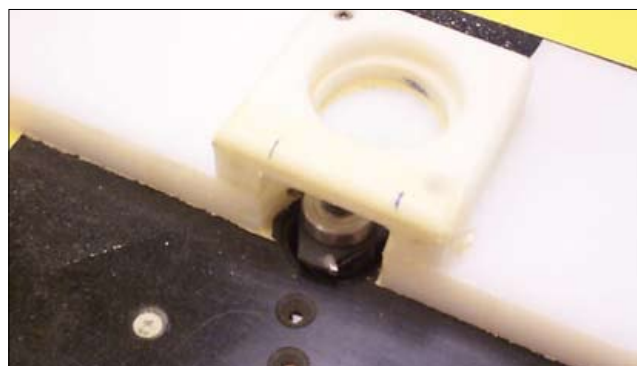
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Unless you have a very long fence you probably won't be able to start and stop this way, so you will have to make some marks on your stock and on your fence. The length of cut for this cutter is $1\frac{3}{8}$ " on either side of centre for a #10 biscuit.

First, make marks on your stock where you want to cut your biscuits. Next, make marks on your fence that are the same distance from centre as the length of your cut.

Pivot your stock into the cutter using the marks on your stock and the marks on the fence as guides. Slide your stock across to the second mark and pivot out. The result will be a perfect cut that will allow you to slide your biscuit back and forth – helping make alignment easier.



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A biscuit will assist in the alignment of your stock, but if you don't have a good jointed edge to start with you won't get a better joint with the biscuit in place either.

Try using your cutter for face frames and mitres. Make sure that you use start and stop blocks for these cuts.

When you are using the cutter for mitres, make an angled jig and rout the first joint. Simply reverse the angled jig to make the second cut.

Start playing with your router and find out how many other tools it can be for you.

Have fun.

