

Before purchasing tools, timber and materials, read every step thoroughly then talk to one of our experts

This garden or deck bench is an easy project with simple joints. The most complicated part is cutting the curves for the seat supports or you could leave the seat flat. Because of its simplistic design, this bench will complement any deck or garden and, because it's so easy to make, you can make more than one and scatter them about.

Use the measurements given as a guide only ... because of the design, this bench can be lengthened or shortened and still look good.

Step 1: Selecting Materials

Because of the versatility of this design, you can use a variety of timbers. You could use radiata pine or other less durable timbers for under cover areas, or more robust timbers like hardwood, cypress pine, cedar or pressure treated pine for exposed conditions.

If using treated pine you should use an H3 rating and be aware that the timber is treated with compounds of copper, chromium and arsenic, termed CCA.

When using this material:

- Wear gloves and dust masks when sawing.
- Any cut or sawn surface of this material will need resealing to ensure its effectiveness in resisting attack.
- Dispose of any off cuts by burying them. Don't burn them as the smoke and ash are toxic.

For the size of bench in this project use 100mm x 25mm (nominal) timber for the rails, seat supports and slats, and 100mm x 100mm for the legs.

For a longer bench you should "beef up" top rails the seat supports connect to and add more supports as required.

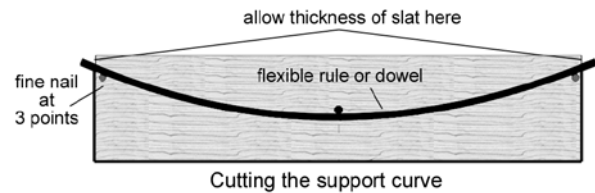
Screws are used instead of nails for their holding power and should be galvanised, especially for treated timber or exposed conditions.

Suitable lengths would be 32mm for the seat slats and 50mm for the others. For a more rugged look you could substitute coach bolts of suitable length and diameter.

Step 2: Cutting Materials

After consulting the exploded plan and determining the measurements to suit your needs, cut a material to size, or you may prefer to measure and cut as you go.

To cut the curves in the seat supports, first measure and mark three points, as shown in the illustration, on one of the supports.



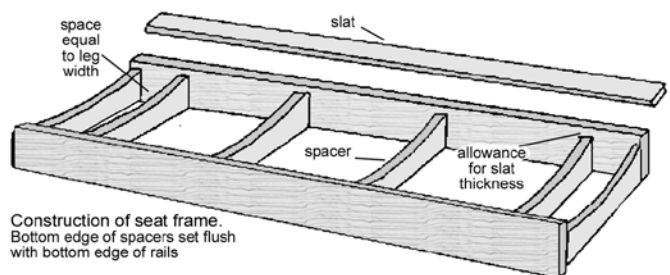
The curve can be as gentle or steep as you like, but make sure that you leave enough "meat" to provide adequate support ... a minimum of 45mm is suggested if you are using 100mm x 25mm (nominal) timber. Drive in a fine nail at each of the points and using a flexible ruler or piece of fine dowel, bend it around the nails and then draw your curve using the ruler or dowel as a guide.

Note. The width of the finished support at its widest point should allow for the thickness of the seat slats so that the first and last slat are flush with the top edge of the top rails.

Now cut your curve with a coping or jigsaw and use this support as a template for marking and cutting the rest.

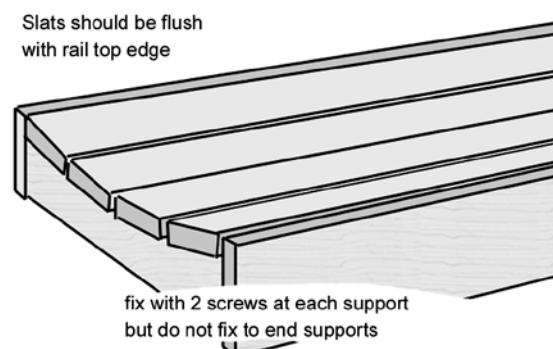
Step 3: Assemble The Seat Frame

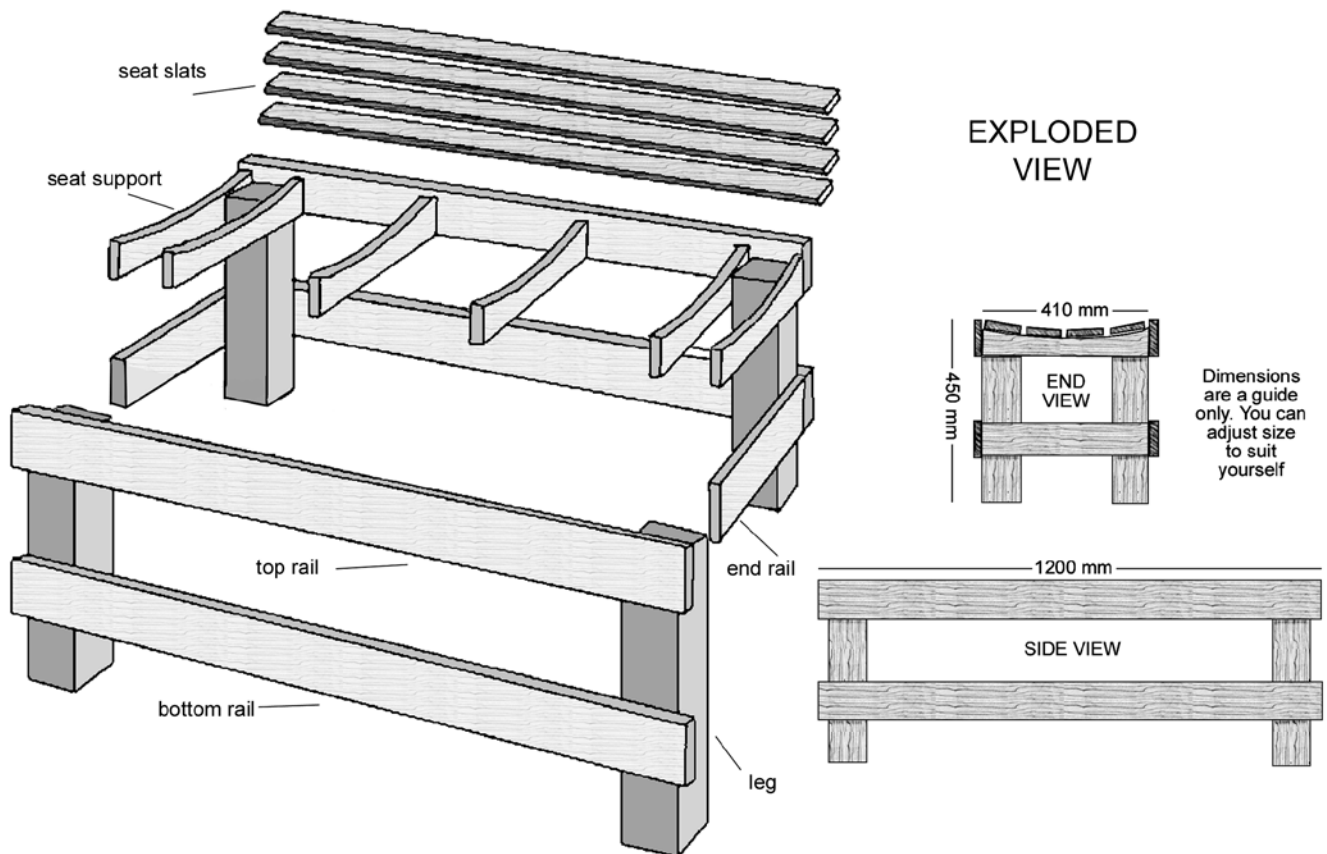
Using 2 long sides and 2 supports, assemble the basic seat frame. Ensure that, if your timber has a "good" side, it is facing out. Pre-drill holes to avoid splitting the timber.



Now take the second and second last seat supports and fix them to the top rail. The spacing should be the width of the leg material. You could use an off-cut of one of the legs to set the spacing.

The remaining seat supports should be spaced equidistant between the second and second last seat supports.

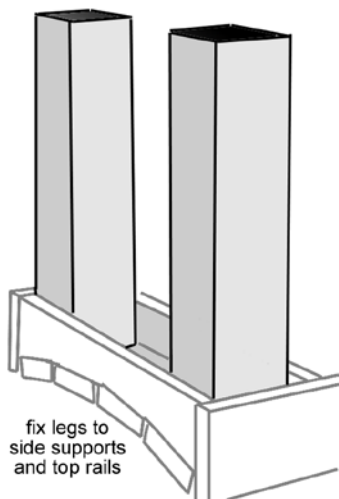




After sanding and smoothing off any sharp edges, evenly space the seat slats and fix them to the four innermost seat supports only. Use two screws at each spacer junction. Don't fix slats to either of the end supports

Step 4: Fixing The Legs

Turn the completed seat over and fix the four legs to the top rails and outer seat supports.



Measure up equally from the bottom of each leg and fix the bottom rails to the legs. Fix the short ends first by lining them up with the edges of the legs and then fix the two long sides.

Step 5: Finishing Your Bench

Depending on the "look" you're after, you can let your bench weather naturally or you can use 2 or 3 coats of a suitable outdoor acrylic paint or oil based stain to match your outside décor and prevent surface checking. Many people paint their projects prior to assembly to ensure that all pieces have a complete coating of paint.

Bench Hints

- For a more finished look, countersink screws and either putty up or add timber caps.
- Use two different widths of slat timber and alternate them for an interesting look.
- Use your bench as a centre piece for two planter boxes made from the same materials and same design.

Important Notice: After the end of March 2006, CCA treated timber will not be permitted for use as handrails, decking boards, picnic tables and children's playground equipment. These products will need to be treated with an alternative timber treatment such as ACQ (alkaline copper quaternary)

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