

Tanktop shelf unit

Materials:

- Sides: Two 32" boards - 1" x 8" pine
- Shelves: Three 18" boards - 1" x 6" pine
- Top piece: One 18" board - 1" x 10" pine
- Bottom piece: One 18" board - 1" x 8" pine
- Towel rung (optional) - One 18" piece of 5/8" hardwood dowelling
- Glue
- White shellac or clear, water-based urethane
- 1-1/2" screws

Tools

- Clamps
- Square
- Drill and drill bits
- Tape measure
- Jigsaw
- Plug cutter
- Flush cut trim saw
- Sander

Steps:



Draw the shape on one side piece



Use drawing aids to help get the shape

Draw a shape you like for the sidepieces. If you're feeling rakishly confident, mark the shape directly onto the board. If you're feeling tentative, draw the shape on cardboard first and cut it out so you're sure it looks okay. Trace the design onto the boards and cut them out using a jigsaw.



The top and bottom pieces will be symmetrical

Trace half of the shape on the top and bottom pieces

Flip the template and trace the shape on the other half

Use a jig saw to cut out the pieces

Next, draw the scrolled shape you want for the top piece. The easiest method is to take a nine inch wide piece of cardboard and draw the design on it. Cut the design out, trace it onto one half of the 18" wide board, then flip the cardboard over and trace it onto the other half of the board. Now you have a symmetrical design. Repeat for the bottom piece, altering the scrolling dimensions a bit so it isn't exactly the same as the top.



Orbital sanders work fast and efficiently



Sand all surfaces and edges



Use a cornering tool or plane to speed up the sanding

Cut out all the pieces and sand smooth. Use a cornering tool or block plane to ease all the sharp edges.

TIP: It's tempting to screw the whole thing together at this point, but do yourself a favour and put the stain, paint or clear-coat on the individual pieces NOW! It's way faster and easier than having to cover all the surfaces of the shelf unit after it's assembled.



Lay out the pieces

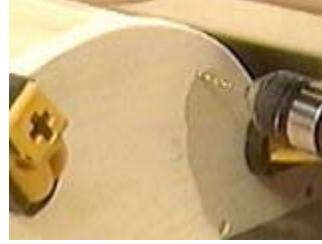
Next, lay the whole thing out with sides, shelves and top and bottom pieces in place. Square the shelves using a speed square. Mark a light pencil line on the side pieces under each of the shelves for reference so that you can assemble the unit fast once you've put the glue on it.



Using a brad point bit makes a clean hole for a plug



Drill the plug hole about three-eighths of an inch deep



Drill pilot holes for the screws

Pre-drill for the screws. I drilled extra deep holes for the screw heads and filled the holes with plugs so you can't see the screw heads. This is a great trick to give the shelf a professional look. If you are using plugs, drill the plughole first using a brad-point bit the same size as the plug cutter. Also pre-drill pilot holes for the screws to prevent the shelves from splitting.



Apply the glue



Clamp and screw the pieces together

Take everything apart, apply glue, reassemble, clamp, and screw.



Use a plug cutter to make plugs from your project wood



Pop them out with a knife



Insert them in the hole with the grain running in the same direction



Cut off the plugs with a flush cut saw



After sanding and finishing the plugs are almost invisible

You can buy pre-made hardwood plugs, or make your own with a plug-cutter bit, available at **Lee Valley Tools**

