

Updating a Classic



Your favorite cowboy or cowgirl will love riding the range on this little steed

Making a child's toy can be a lot of fun. The hours spent cutting, sanding, assembling and finishing a toy are richly rewarded by the happiness shown on a child's face when he or she receives that toy. There's little else to compare with it.

For generations, one of the most popular of all children's toys has been the rocking horse. Little *buckaroos* and *buckarettes* love to climb in the saddle and ride the living room range, looking for strays and chasing the bad guys.

The easy-to-follow plans presented here will help you create this family heirloom in about 12 hours and have it ready to occupy its treasured space under your family tree this Holiday season.

Step 1: Getting Started

The first step is to make your full-size patterns. There are two ways you can accomplish this. The first is to follow the drawings provided and make full-scale patterns for parts A through H. Begin by drawing 1" grids on pieces of cardboard or artist's board and then duplicate your drawings onto this larger grid. The optional method involves going to a local copy center and enlarging the patterns provided here by using a large format, roll-fed copy machine. These machines typically enlarge up to 400% in a single pass, so you'll have to make multiple passes to get to the desired dimensions.

Once you've drawn (or copied) your patterns, cut them out and trace them onto a 6-foot and 8-foot length of 2" x 12" stock (we used yellow pine). Work around any knots or defects in the wood and for maximum strength, be sure to follow the grain direction indicated by the arrows on the drawings.

Next, cut your stock into manageable sized pieces before attempting to cut out the final shapes with your bandsaw, saber saw or scroll saw. The saddle (G) can be made from your choice of 2" x 12" stock, then shaped....or from 3/4" stock (H

- not shown) and then upholstered (see Step 11).

Cut the braces (J) to size and chamfer the edges using your Table Saw, Disc Sander or Jointer.

Step 2: Drill the holes

for the handle, eyes and tail where noted in the drawings. Drill the alignment holes in parts B,C,D,E & F, as shown. Locate these holes very carefully since they will be used to align the various parts of the horse during assembly. Drill the holes for the legs (parts B & C) from the back, being sure not to drill all the way through the stock to their front sides.

Step 3: Sand all contoured parts

using your disc and drum sanders. Tape the two rockers (A) together with double-faced tape and pad sand them together at the same time to be certain their contours are identical. See Fig. 1.

Step 4: Use the Shaper

with a Tongue Cutter to create the 1/4" deep groove in the back of the head (E) that will accept the rug yarn mane. See Fig. 2



Fig. 1 Sand the two rockers to identical contours using the *pad sanding* technique.

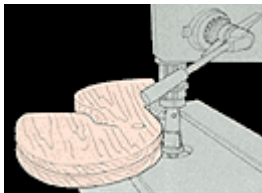


Fig. 2 Use the Tongue Shaper Cutter to cut the mane groove in the back of the head.

Step 5: Mark the outside edges

of parts B,C,D,E & G and round them over on the shaper using a 1/4" quarter-round cutter -- or with your router and a rounding-over bit. Do not round the front edges of the neck where it meets with the body...or the straight, vertical edge at the rear of piece E, since these edges must be square when assembled.

Step 6: Assemble the main body

parts (D,E & F). Use pieces of 3/8" dowel rod to align the parts when gluing and clamping, but DO NOT glue the dowels in place yet. If you prefer, the body can also be assembled with #10 x 2-1/2" flathead wood screws. Sand the body assembly on the disc sander so all the parts are flush. See Fig. 3.

Step 7: Mount the legs

(B & C). Align the legs with 3/8" dowel rods that extend through the body and into the legs on both sides. Disassemble, then glue and clamp the legs into place with the dowel rods. The legs can also be assembled without the glue by using #10 x 2-1/2" flathead wood screws. This approach allows you to disassemble the finished rocking horse for shipping or storage, if necessary. The screws can be covered with stain or paint later.

Step 8: Center the front and rear braces

(J) on the feet and attach with two #10 x 2" flathead wood screws driven up through the braces and into the soles of each foot. Place the horse with the two attached braces on the rockers. Make certain the horse is sitting level on the rockers by sliding it back and forth until the body is parallel with the floor. Fasten the front and rear braces to the rockers using #10 x 1-1/2" flathead wood screws. Attach the remaining three braces (J) to the rockers using #10 x 1-1/2" flathead wood screws. Round off the sharp edges of the rockers at this point, being sure they remain fairly square for maximum stability.

Step 9: Attach the saddle

(G or H). The 3/4" thick upholstered saddle board (H) is attached with #10 x 1-1/2" flathead wood screws. If you choose the 1-1/2" thick solid wood saddle (G), it is attached with 3/8" dowels and glue. Determine the locations for the three saddle mounting holes on the bottom of the saddle and drive a small brad into the center of each hole location, leaving about 1/2" of the brad protruding. Snip the heads off these brads using wire cutters. Turn the saddle over and set it carefully in position on the horse body. Lightly tap the top of the saddle with your hand or fist to transfer the hole centers to the horse body. Turn the saddle over and pull the brads out. Drill three 3/8" blind holes in the bottom of the wood saddle (G) and the top of the horse body at the indicated locations. Dowel and glue the saddle to the body. Place a weight on the seat or clamp it firmly into position while the seat dries to assure good adhesion.

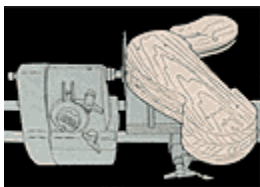


Fig. 3 Use the Disc Sander to sand the assembled body contours flush

Step 10: Apply the stain or finish

of your choice. For this project, one coat of stain and two coats of polyurethane varnish were used.

Step 11: (Optional) Upholster the saddle

(H). Use your bandsaw to cut out and chamfer the top edge of a piece of 2" thick foam rubber. Then, cut the saddle covering out of leather, vinyl or cloth. Attach the front edge of the material to the front of the 3/4" thick saddle board using staples or decorative upholsterer's tacks. Pull the material back over the foam. Locate the back edge and insert an upholstery tack strip (available from upholstery shops) through the covering material. Fold the tack strip under the foam and pound the tacks by hitting the seat with a rubber mallet. Tack the sides of the covering material under the saddle and along the sides. Pleat the material as you go by folding it under and securing it with upholstery tacks or staples.

Step 12: The mane.

To make the horse's mane, use a skein of rug yarn and unloop it. Cut it into three equal parts, each about 14" long. Next, take a piece of 1/2" wide durable tape (reinforced duct tape, etc.) and lay it out on a flat surface with its sticky side up. Lay the yarn across the tape and press it down firmly to secure it. For additional strength, stitch the yarn onto the tape with a sewing machine. After the yarn is secured to the tape, glue the mane into the head groove. Use a small stick to force it into the groove. Several small pieces of wood can be used to wedge the mane in place while the glue dries.

Step 13: The tail.

The tail is made from a single skein of rug yarn, unlooped and cut. Wrap 2" of one end of this yarn with a section of yard and tie it securely. This will help the tail stand out from the body. Glue the tail into place.

Step 14: Eyes and ears. the eyes can be found at most craft shops. The eyes used on this project have 1/4" stems and are glued into place with yellow woodworker's glue. Or, if you prefer, the eyes may simply be painted on.

To make the ears, cut four triangles out of soft leather or vinyl. Put two triangles face-to-face and stitch them together where indicated in the drawing. Turn them inside-out, fold the bottom corners together and attach them to the horse's head with small screws.

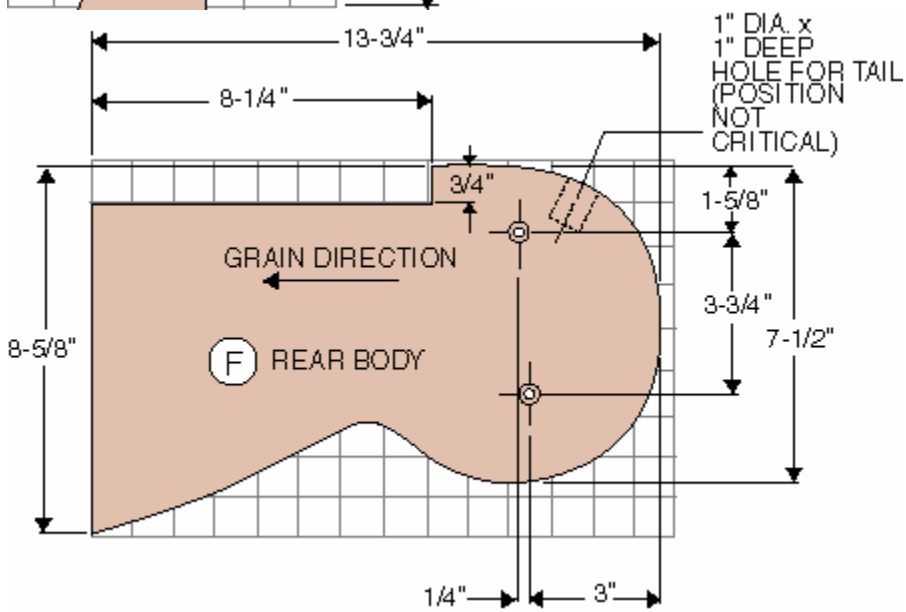
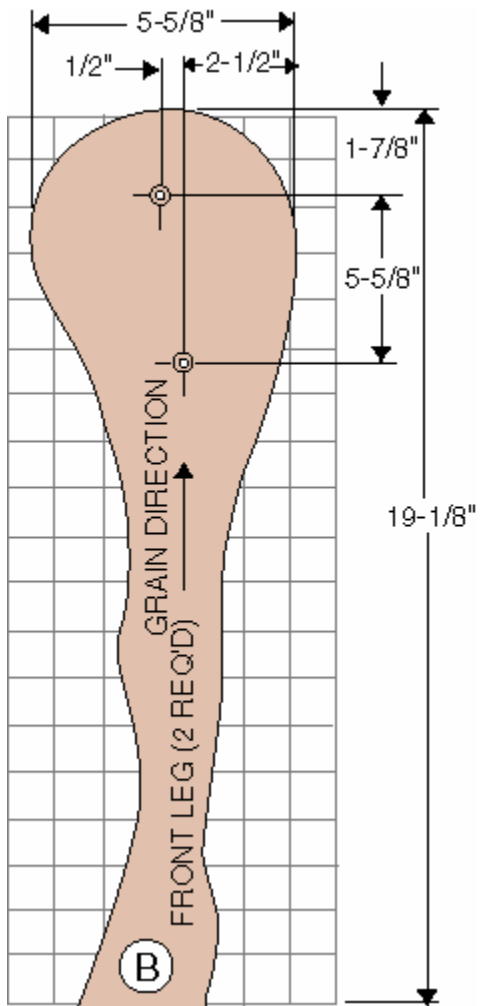
LIST OF MATERIALS

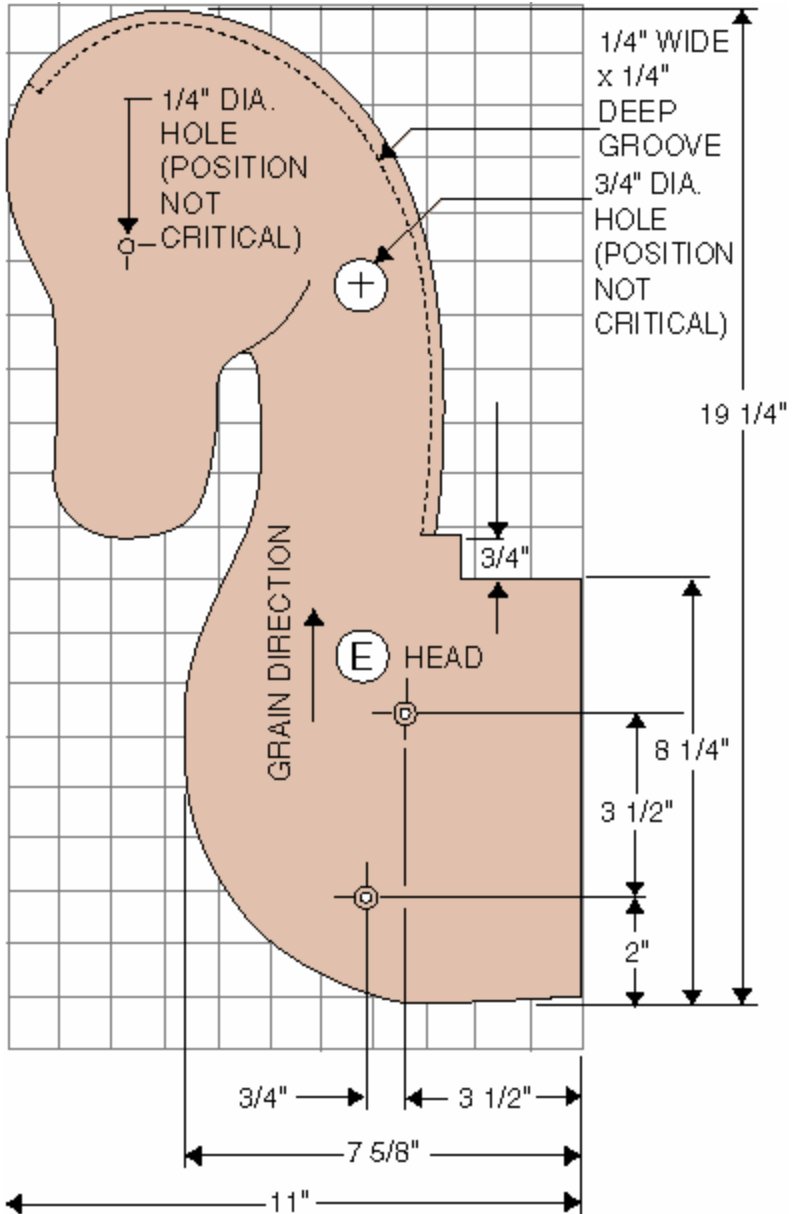
(finished dimensions in inches)

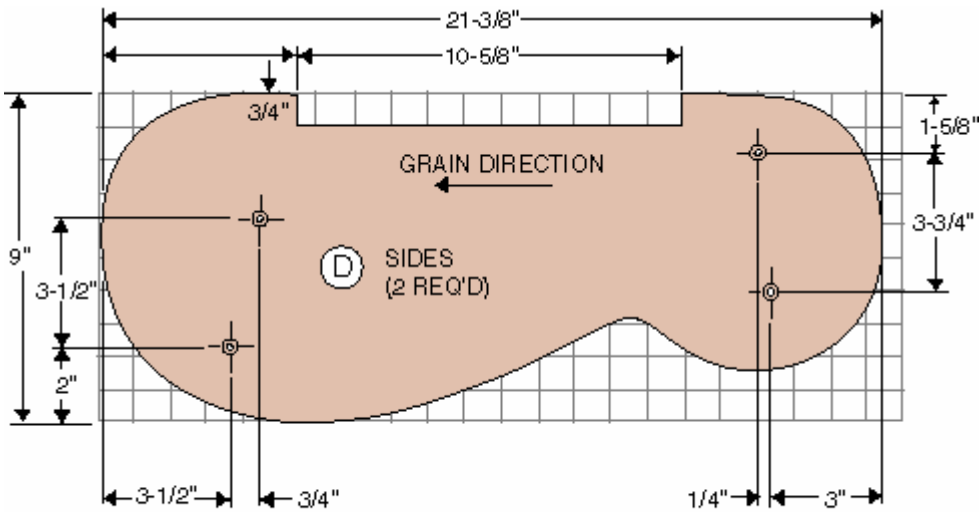
A	Rockers (2)	1-1/2 x 7 x 40-3/4
B	Front legs	1-1/2 x 5-5/8 x 19-1/8
C	Rear legs (2)	1-1/2 x 7-1/8 x 20-1/4
D	Sides (2)	1-1/2 x 9 x 21-3/8
E	Head	1-1/2 x 11 x 19-1/4
F	Rear body	1-1/2 x 8-3/4 x 13-3/4
G	Wooden saddle	1-1/2 x 10-1/2 x 8-1/2
H	Upholstered saddle (optional)	3/4 x 10-1/2 x 8-1/2
J	Braces (5)	3/4 x 3-1/2 x 14
K	Handle	3/4 dia. dowel x 9

MISCELLANEOUS

#10 x 1-1/2" flathead wood screws
#10 x 2" flathead wood screws
#10 x 2-1/2" flathead wood screws
3/8" dowel rod
Material for saddle covering
Rug yarn (2 skeins)
Leather or vinyl for the ears
Eyes (2)







TIP: MAKE PATTERN FOR PART (D) FIRST AND TRANSFER HOLE ALIGNMENT POSITIONS TO OTHER PARTS.

