

How to Safely Cut a Dado in a Board <12”

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The Situation

- A project was planned for cutting cross grain $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " dados in boards <12" long, 9" wide
- 340 boards were to be cut
- Some boards may be warped

Challenges

- Safety
- Clean cuts
- Time
- Dust/chip accumulation

Options

1. Use the table saw with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " dado blade stack and a large push stick to hold the board fast against the table
2. Use the table saw with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " dado blade stack and a miter gauge to keep board from rotating
3. Use the table saw with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " dado blade stack and feather boards top or side or both
4. Use the table saw with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " dado blade stack and a sled
5. Use a router table with $\frac{3}{4}$ " straight cut bit
6. Use a router jig and router with $\frac{3}{4}$ " bit
7. Use a radial arm saw with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " dado stack

Consensus

- Option 1 was deemed the safest though #2 was also viable
- Option 3 was viable, but perhaps awkward
- Option 4 seemed a little risky during the draw-back of the sled back over the blade
- Option 5 had potential for wondering cuts and the build-up of saw dust
- Option 6 was safe but slow and had dust build up
- Option 7 had too much blade exposed

Caveats

- **Boards must be firmly held against the table and the fence to prevent kickback**
- Avoid warped boards if at all possible
- Wood workers need to pace themselves and not get hypnotized by the large number of cuts. Take breaks.
- The dado blades must be close to the table saw fence, 1", and not 8" away to avoid the risk of kickbacks