

Push Sticks and Blocks: Theory and Use

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Use of Push Sticks and Blocks

- To assist with moving wood through table saw, jointer, band saw, or router table when wood is moved past blade.

Purpose of Push Sticks and Blocks

- To keep fingers away from blade
- To move wood past blade
- To hold wood against table top or bed
- To keep wood next to the fence

On Table Saws, Push Sticks need to push in three different directions

- Forward
- Down
- To the side

Some Push sticks push in only one direction, forward, pretty useless, especially for table saws



Push Stick/block holds board down but depends on friction to push the wood forward and to the side



Pushes in down and forward, made from $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood, good for longer and narrow board cutting on table saws



Push block pushes in 2 directions,
down and forward, made from 2"x6"



For band saws, a simple push block helps keep fingers away from the blade



For Joints, consider building a push stick as below. Note “dog” on bottom has grain orientated such that it will not crack or fail. Dog should reach down $3/8$ ” to $1/2$ ” below plate



A feather board can push the wood against the fence and assist, but adds friction



Takeaways

- It's all about managing the three critical forces, forward, down, and to the side (fence) to prevent kickbacks
- Push sticks and push blocks should be viewed as sacrificial and expendable to be replaced or re-cut when necessary