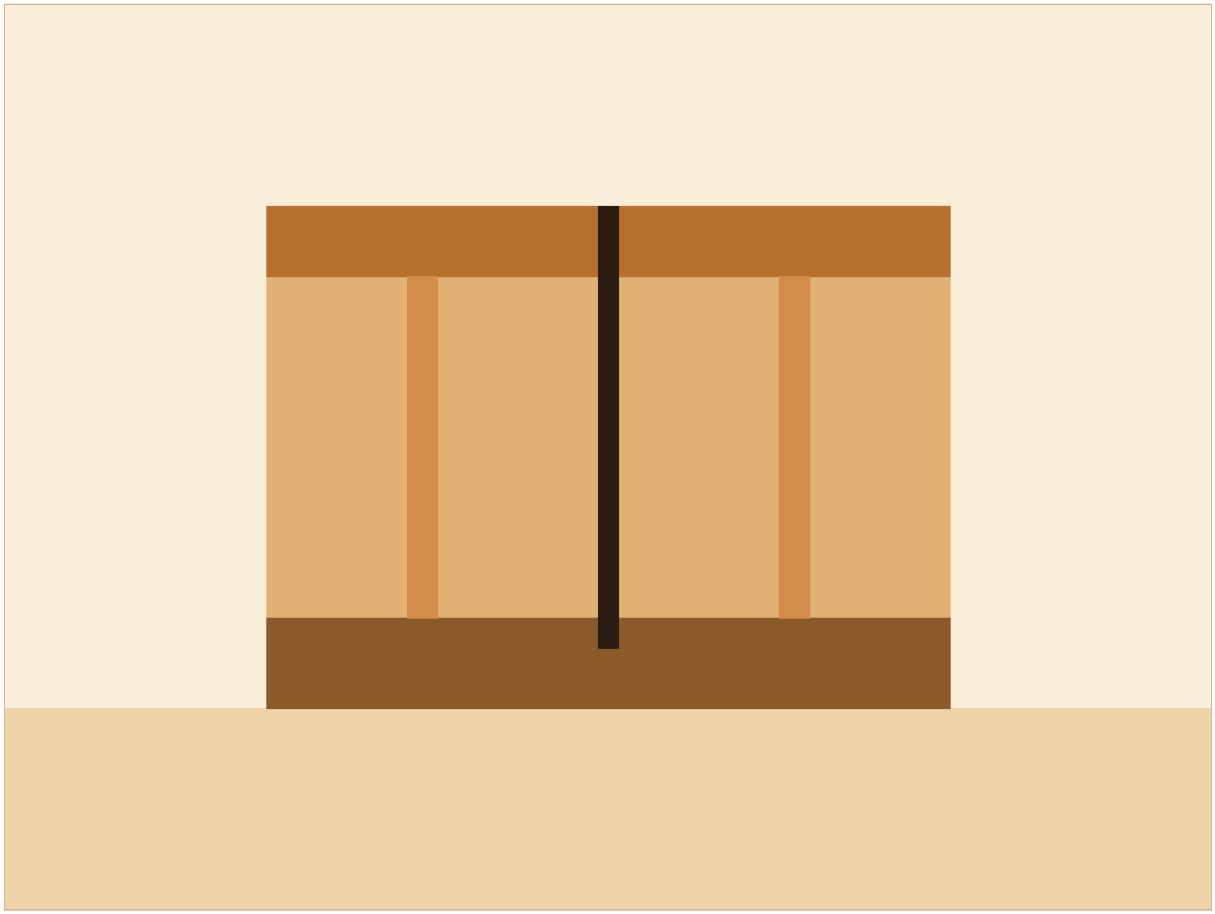
Table Saw Crosscut Sled

by Logan



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Overview

This is an Example plan, has not been validated

The single most useful jig a table saw owner can build. A crosscut sled carries the work past the blade instead of dragging it along the fence — square cuts every time, no kickback, and small parts stay safely away from the blade.

The heart of the build is the **five-cut method** for squaring the fence: a ten-minute calibration that gets you within a few thousandths over two feet.

Materials

Finishing

- Paste wax

Hardware & consumables

- 1 box × Wood screws — 1 1/4"

Lumber & sheet goods

- 1 × Baltic birch plywood — 1/2" × 30" × 24"
- 1 × Hardwood for fences — 8/4 × 3" × 30"
- 1 × Hardwood for runners — 3/8" × 3/4" × 24" (×2)

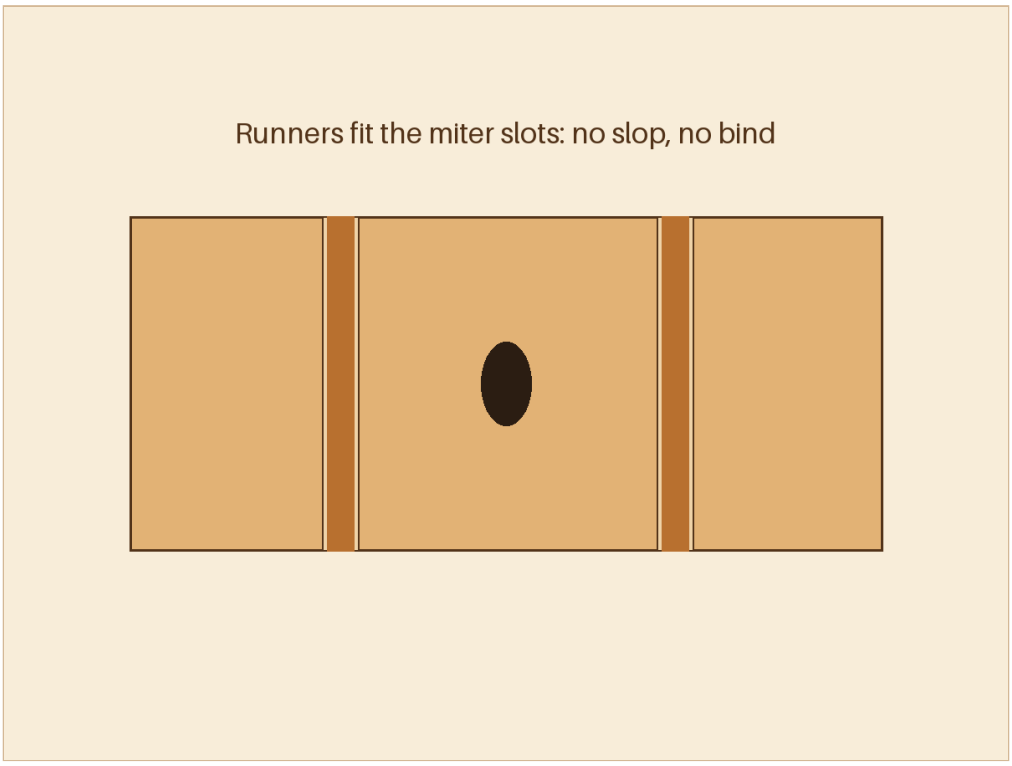
Tools

- Table saw — This one has no alternative — the sled is FOR the table saw
- Drill
- Hand plane — Fitting the runners *(or: Random orbit sander)*

Build steps

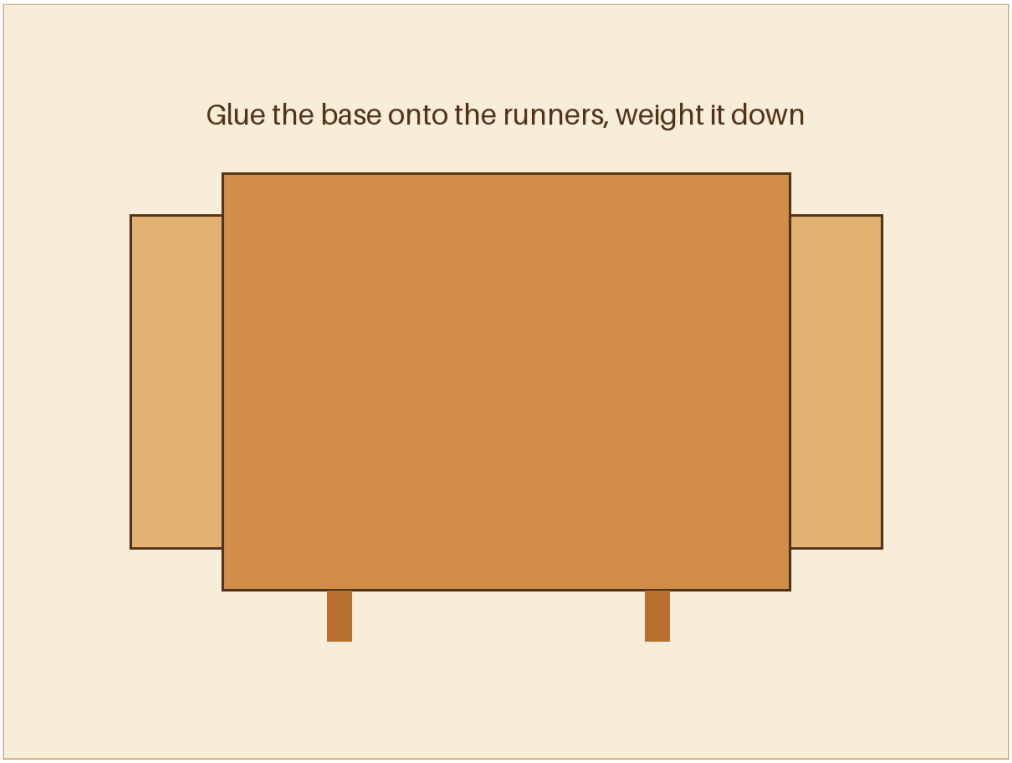
Step 1 — *Make the runners*

Mill two hardwood runners to slide in your miter slots with **zero** side-to-side slop but no binding. Sneak up on the fit with a hand plane or sandpaper. This fit is the whole jig — spend the time.



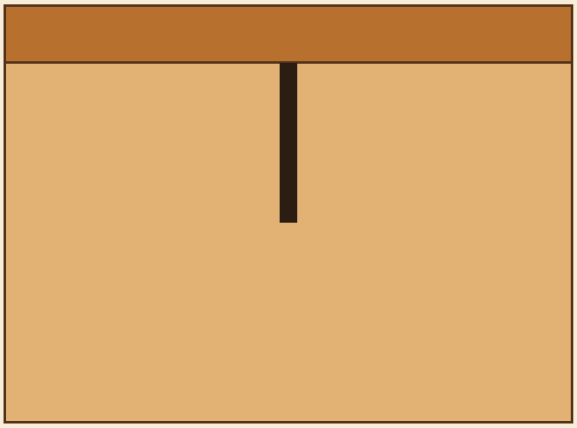
Step 2 — *Attach the base to the runners*

Set the runners in the slots (shim them slightly proud with washers), apply glue, and lay the plywood base on top positioned so it overhangs the blade slot area. Weight it down and let it cure, then add a few countersunk screws from underneath.



Step 3 — *Add the front fence*

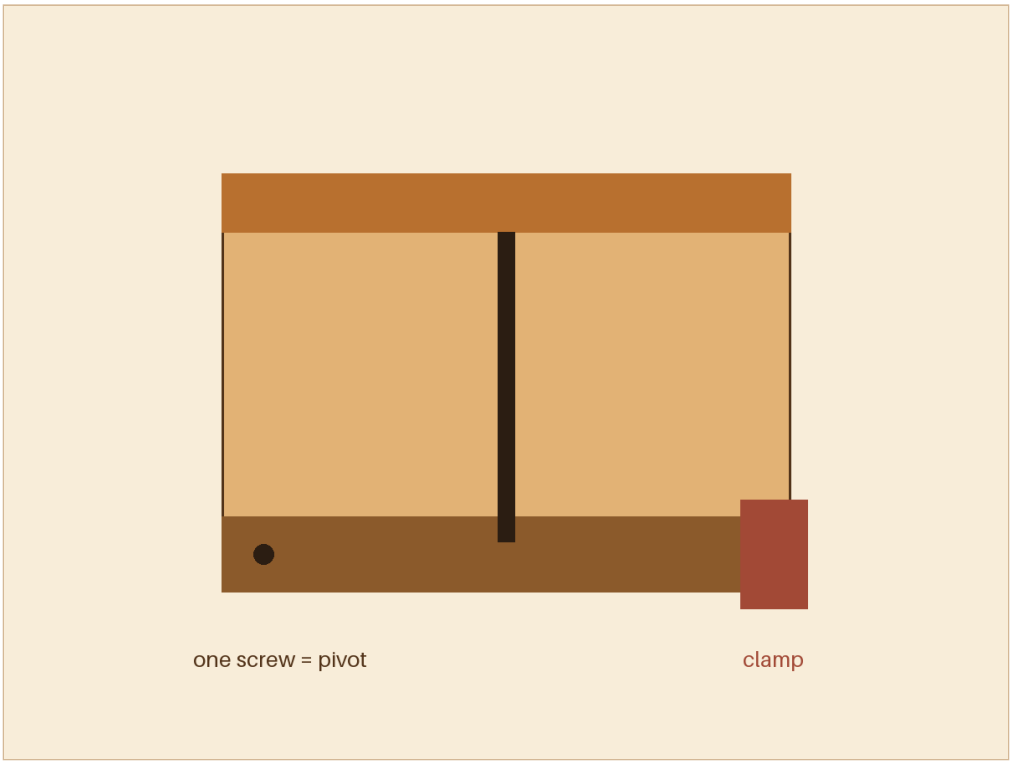
Screw the front fence (the one far from you in use) to the leading edge. It's structural, not a reference — square doesn't matter here. Raise the blade and cut halfway across the base.



Front fence on, then cut halfway across

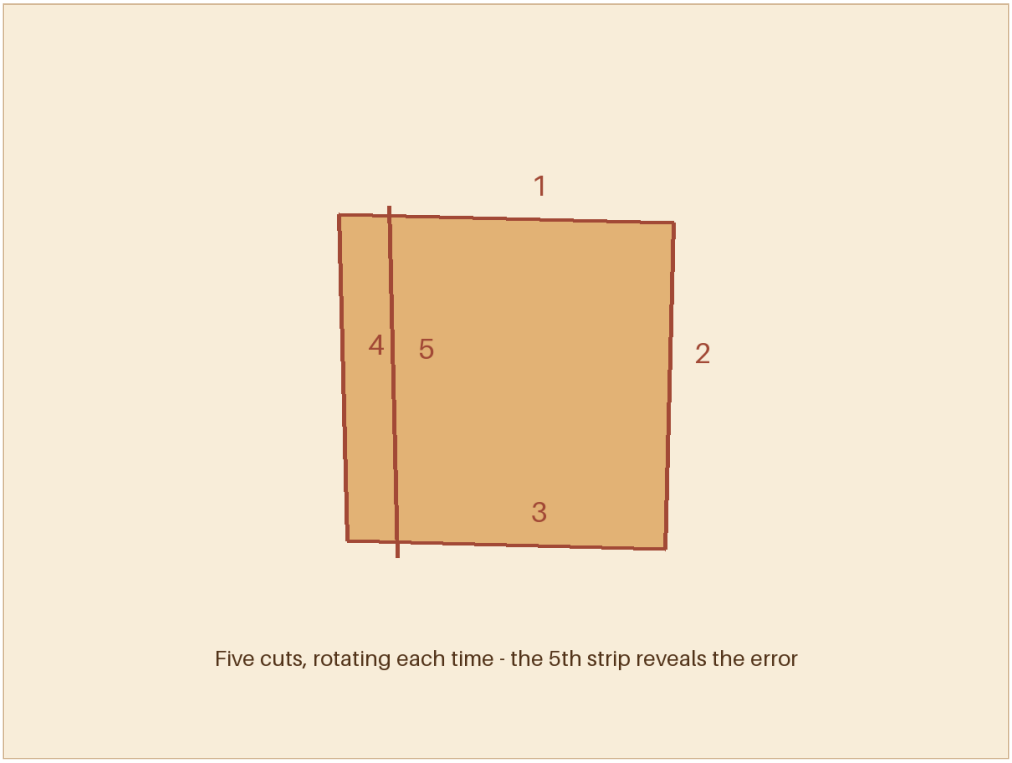
Step 4 — *Attach the rear fence at 90° — roughly*

Screw one end of the rear fence (the reference fence, nearest you) with a single screw, square it to the blade cut with a framing square, and add one clamp at the far end. One screw + one clamp = adjustable.



Step 5 — *The five-cut calibration*

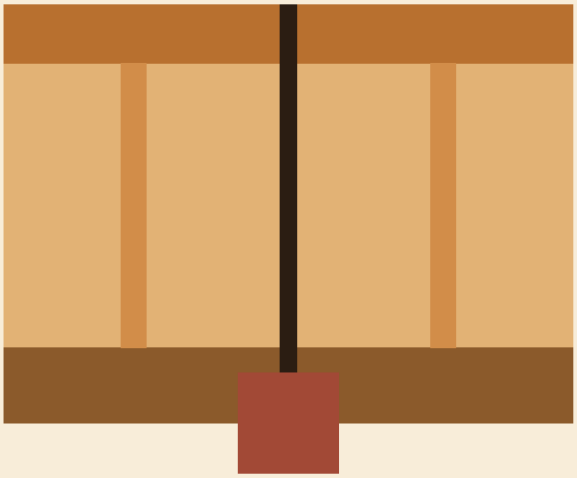
Take a scrap panel and make five cuts, rotating the same direction between each. The fifth off-cut's width difference, divided across the cuts, tells you exactly how far the fence is off. Pivot the clamped end by half the error, re-test, and when the error is under a few thou, drive the remaining screws. Search "five cut method" for a video — it's easier seen than read.



Five cuts, rotating each time - the 5th strip reveals the error

Step 6 — *Finish and safety block*

Wax the bottom until it glides. Glue a thick block of scrap where the blade exits the rear fence — the blade emerges *inside* the block instead of into the air where your thumb might be. Never remove it.



Safety block where the blade exits - never remove it