

Routing with Denis

Routing course RW0: Fundamentals of hand-held routing

The router is, without doubt, the most flexible power tool you could own. Its use is not intuitive and new owners need to be started off on the right foot if they are to realise the potential of this machine. Existing users need to learn what they are missing. This course is designed to fulfil this need.



The secret of router use is understanding the many ways there are to guide the router in relation to the piece of wood being machined. Some routing can be done freehand. Guiding the base of the router against a straightedge is the way to trim dead-straight edges and make other straight cuts such as rebates and dados. The supplied fence is another way of guiding the router in a straight line in order to cut grooves and flutes. Bits with integrated bearings allow a variety of curved and other special cuts. Pattern bits and guide bushes open up the exciting world of pattern routing and provide an efficient and accurate way of duplicating components. A simple pivot attachment allows the cutting of perfect circles, arcs, holes and rings.

The course starts by discussing safety aspects. Next we examine the anatomy of a modern plunge-router and learn how to make the various adjustments. The rules for cutter insertion are covered along with advice on cutter maintenance. Then the fun starts: each of the above ways of guiding the router is explained and then demonstrated and you repeat the exercise. Practical applications of each method are then discussed. The importance of jigs to routing success is introduced. The distinction between using the router as a cutting tool and a trimming tool is made as is the distinction between edge-routing, face-routing and arris-routing.

A number of the exercises use a pattern bit (a straight bit with a shank-mounted bearing). It is recommended that you purchase such a bit so that you can practice at home what you have learnt. Another specific item on sale is a crosscut trimming and dado/rebate jig. Other router and general accessories such as C-clamps are also available.

Course details

Level: Introductory

Date and time: This is a half-day course (09h00 to 13h00) scheduled on request for one, two or three students. The student's router is used for the hands-on exercises

Venue: Co.Space, Midrand. See the 'Contact me' page of my website for a map.

Course fee: See my website for the course fee. Pairs such as father and son, husband and wife, two good woodworking buddies etc are offered a reduced price.

Prerequisite: An appreciation of why woodworkers need to fashion joints and a familiarity of terms such as groove, rebate, dado and mortice and tenon.

Audience:

1. New owners of a router who want to start on the right foot.
2. Existing router owners who have done some routing but realise that they are not fully exploiting the tool.
3. Woodworkers who don't own a router might attend this course before deciding whether to purchase a router. Advice on what model to buy will be given.

Note: This course covers hand-held routing only. Course RW8 is an introduction to using a router table.

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