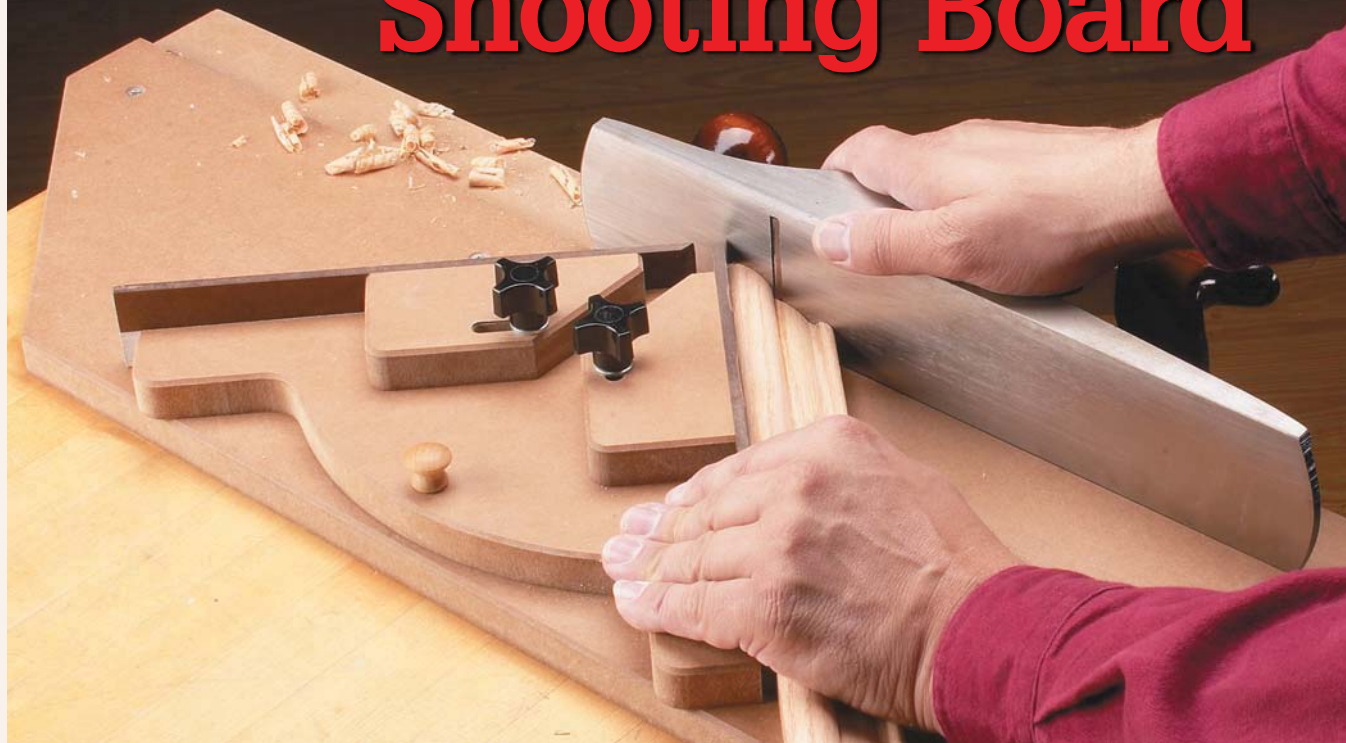


Setting Up & Using Your Shooting Board



In theory, using a shooting board is pretty simple. You just hold the workpiece with one hand and slide the plane forward with the other hand. The shooting board guides the plane to trim the end of the workpiece. But there's a bit more to it than that. Getting good results takes a little skill and technique. And there are a few tips that can also help.

Check Your Plane – Before using your shooting board, you might want to spend a minute to give your hand plane a quick once-over. First, check to make sure that the blade is sharp. Cutting through the end grain of a miter is tough work, so having a sharp blade is a must.

Second, you should check to see that the sides of the plane are square with the bottom, see photo at left. If the bottom and sides are just a little out of square, you can compensate for this by adjusting the blade sideways until it is square with the side. (Use the lateral adjustment lever just underneath the blade to make this adjustment.)

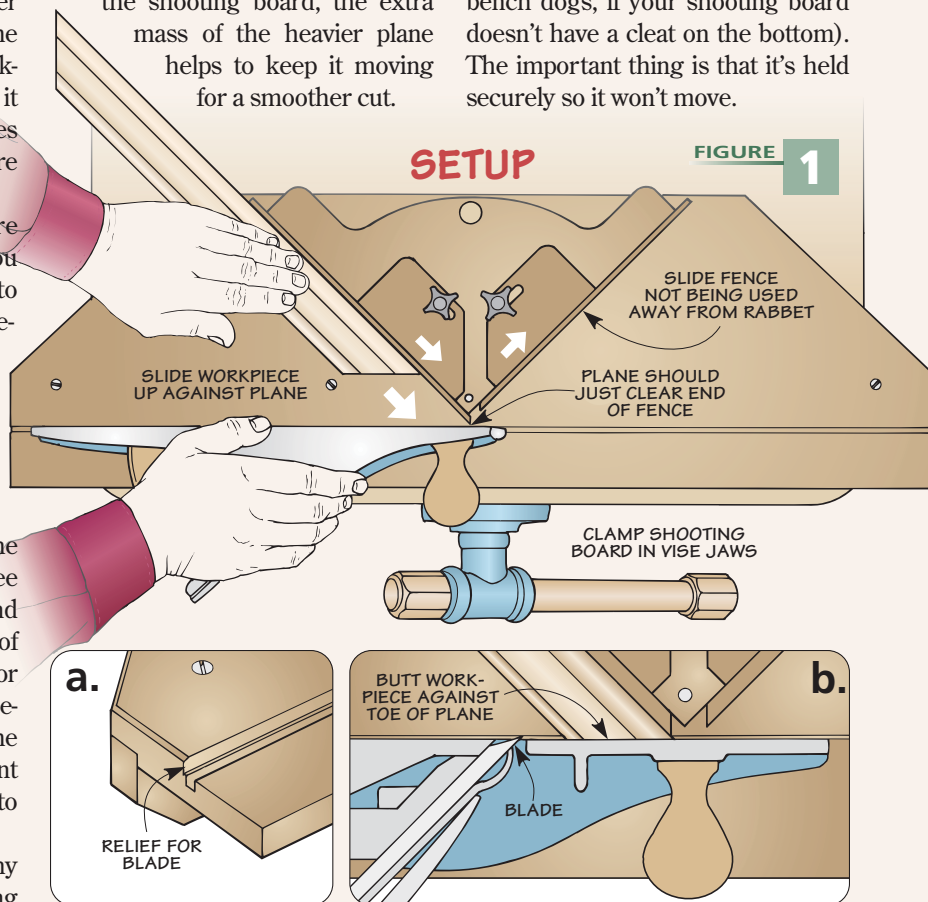
One other thing. You can use any size bench plane with this shooting

board. But I like to use a larger plane, like a #5 or a #7. When you start pushing the plane forward on the shooting board, the extra mass of the heavier plane helps to keep it moving for a smoother cut.

Setup – Once your plane is ready, the next step is to clamp the shooting board in a vise (or between two bench dogs, if your shooting board doesn't have a cleat on the bottom). The important thing is that it's held securely so it won't move.



▲ **Check for Square.** To get good results, the sides of your plane need to be square with the sole.



Now position the stop block and make sure that the locking pin is fully seated to lock it in place. Then adjust the sliding fence so that the end of the fence face is about $\frac{1}{32}$ " behind the edge of the rabbet that the plane will ride in. The other fence (the one that isn't in use) should be slid back so it is well out of the way.

Relief – The very first time you use the shooting board, the blade of the plane will cut a small, shallow relief along the edge of the rabbet, as you can see in Figure 1a. The relief is necessary to create clearance for the plane blade. Before setting a workpiece on the shooting board, set your plane to take a fine shaving and then take a pass along the entire length of the rabbet. Now you're ready to start planing an actual workpiece.

Shooting a Miter – To use the shooting board, hold the hand plane tight against the edge of the rabbet. The toe of the plane should be just past the end of the fence, like you see in Figure 1. Then slide the workpiece along the fence until it butts up against the bottom of the plane (Figure 1b).

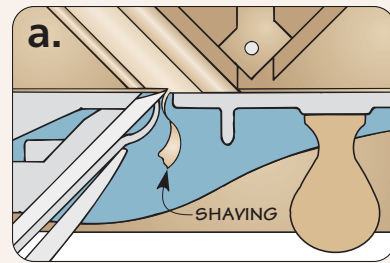
Now while holding the workpiece firmly in place, slide the plane forward to take a thin, wispy shaving off the end of the workpiece (Figure 2). Before making the next pass, just draw the plane back and slide the workpiece forward until it contacts

the toe of the plane again. Take as many passes as necessary to trim the workpiece to its final size.

Try to make each cut in one continuous sweep, rather than hacking your way through the workpiece in short, choppy strokes. (Here's where the weight and mass of the plane come into play.)

One trick I've learned is that it helps to wet the end grain with a damp cloth (see photo in margin) before trimming the end. This helps the blade slice through the wood a little easier, giving you a much cleaner cut.

Different Angles – One of the nice features about our shooting board is that it can be used for more than just trimming 45° miters. For example, if you need to shave a hair off the square end of a workpiece, all you have to do is move the stop



▲ **Smooth Cutting.** Dampening the end grain with a wet cloth makes it easier for the plane to slice through the wood without tearing the fibers.

block and re-position the sliding fence, see left photo below.

Sometimes you need to trim a miter that is cut at an angle other than 45°. That's no problem with this shooting board. Simply lift up the locking pin and set the stop block to the desired angle. (You can use a bevel gauge to do this.) Then clamp the stop in place, see right photo below. Shop Note: You will have to place a couple of spacers underneath the shooting board to raise it up off the workbench to create clearance for the head of the clamp. 🛠️



▲ **Shooting End Grain.** With the stop block set perpendicular to the edge of the shooting board, you can shave a hair off the end of a workpiece.



▲ **Other Angles.** By disengaging the locking pin and securing the stop block with a clamp, you can use the shooting board to trim miters at any angle.