

PRICE: £61.69

PROS

- Versatile quick jointing

CONS

- Hole in your pocket?

FURTHER INFO

Trend

0800 487363 for stockists
www.trendmachinery.co.uk

TREND POCKET HOLE JIG

No change to pocket

Trend's pocket hole jig comes with everything you need to get started in pocket-hole joinery. The system allows robust joining of timber at right angles, in mitres and at other angles, and edge to edge. It needs minimal marking out, and it's very fast.

The system uses flat bottomed holes drilled at an acute angle in one component. This allows screws to be driven through both pieces being joined to give a robust fixture. The jig has two essential components - the angled drill guide bushes allow accurate drilling at an acute angle, while the special stepped drill bit cuts the screw pocket and the pilot hole for the fixing screw in a single action. The positions of the guide bush pillars can be adjusted for different hole spacing.

There are two essential adjustments for effective operation. You need to ensure that the integral clamp is properly adjusted to hold the workpiece tightly. The clamp can be set up in two different positions, and the extension of the clamping head can be adjusted by a screw and lock-nut arrangement. The jig can cope with timber thicknesses

between 16 and 32mm, but the system is optimised for 19mm thick stock. You also need to adjust the depth setting collar on the drill bit to ensure that the pocket hole is the right depth and the screw will not break through the mating timber. Trend recommends setting the depth so that there is around 3mm between the drill bit and the base of the jig - a £1 coin is a convenient set-up aid for this. Finally Trend recommend (and supply in the kit) dome headed self-tapping screws with a square Robertson style drive recess. These give a solid seating on the bottom of the screw hole and are less likely to have the head chewed up than other screw styles. The kit also includes a mole-type clamp, with flattened jaws for keeping edge jointed stock aligned during assembly.

I used the system to make a simple square framework out of 19mm plywood. After dimensioning the pieces (the longest task), I used the jig to drill a pair

of pocket holes at each end of two of the pieces. This was very fast - Trend recommend using a high drill speed to maximise the bit life. Otherwise there can be a risk of drill damage. After the holes are drilled, the assembly can simply be screwed together. For a solid assembly, it's helpful to have a solid fence to press against while drilling, ensuring accurate alignment. The kit comes with a long and a short square tipped screw driver, for different assembly situations. I was able to use the shorter one in my cordless drill, for screwing the first joint together. However, given the small size of my trial construction, I had to resort to a flexible screwdriver for all the other joints. If you can use a powered screwdriver, it's best to do so, because it is easier to control and ensure a clean joint than the manual approach, as well as being faster and less tiring.

My little box came together in minutes and was very strong - certainly strong enough to hold my weight. Trend recommend gluing as well as using the pocket holes - with no clamps needed. I'm not sure that gluing would add much in many construction designs, especially if end grain is butting against long grain as would have been the case in my box, if I'd used solid timber. Trend also offer a special plug cutter to cut accurate plugs. ■



This is a top-of-the-range pocket jig that can handle 16-32mm stock but you may have to use a flexi drive if the work is too small



Set up the bit spacing with a £1 coin



Clamped and in action

