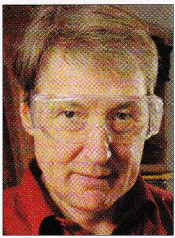


Top 10 router table tips



Peter Brett shares his methods for getting the best out of a router table

SAFETY FIRST

1 Safety is very important. Hold downs, push stick, dust and chip extraction, ear and eye protection are all minimal requirements.

FEED DIRECTION

2 The direction of feed is usually indicated on the fence or table of ready-made tables. Mark your own table with an arrow to avoid mistakes. At best, material might get flung back at you, at worst you are risking serious injury.

FEED SPEED

3 Be sensitive to the feed speed of the workpiece. Listen to the router – any drastic slowing of the motor means that the feed rate is too high.

CUTTER SIZE

4 Smaller cutters can be set on higher speeds, larger diameter cutters need lower speeds. Consult the router or cutter manual.

IN THE GROOVE

5 I have broken a couple of bits when making grooves – usually by trying to be too ambitious. Using a slot cutter may be a better option. Make a scribing cut first before the full depth of cut needed. Beware that grooves can also pack with shavings, making it hard to proceed with the cut.

MOULDINGS

6 Edge moulding is a great job to do on the router table. Adjust the cheeks of the router fence for maximum chip extraction and maximum workpiece support.

FREEHAND

7 Freehand routing is best achieved using a run-on pin. Some tables have this as a standard feature.

ON TREND

8 If your table doesn't have a quick and accurate height adjustment method, try the height adjuster tool

available from Trend – it saves a lot of fiddling.

BEST BUYS

9 Buy the best TCT cutters you can. They give a finer finish and last longer. They can be sharpened too – with care!

SIZE MATTERS

10 Results will be better with a more powerful and bigger router. Floorstanding tables probably need a 2000w, ½in collet, variable speed machine, while smaller bench top models can be used with a ¼in collet router. ■