

Scribing wheels

In the good old days, the trick for copying a profile was to run a suitably sized washer against the wall using a pencil in the hole to draw the profile directly onto the workpiece or a piece of paper to make a template. These days, of course, the washer has been replaced by purpose-made scribing wheels such as these ones from Axminster, Trend and Veritas reviewed opposite (see panel). You can see from the pictures here, in which I'm using a wheel to scribe a window board, the general principle of their operation.



▲ Pic. 1 A loose fitting template is dropped into place and a suitably sized wheel is pushed against the walls and run around them to make an offset mark



▲ Pic. 2 The template is trimmed back to this line using whatever method you have to hand, such as bandsaw, coping saw or jig saw



▲ Pic. 3 The result is an accurate template of the area to which the board will be fitted. It's narrower all round by the wheel offset, of course, but this is corrected later



▲ Pic. 4 You'll need to extend the lines where the scribing wheel goes around a corner as it will have been radiused by the wheel



▲ Pic. 5 Once you cut to this line, the result should be a board that drops into the opening for a perfect fit on all edges

The most basic of these kits is the Veritas Offset Wheel Gauge, which contains five brass discs ranging in size from 1/8in to 1/2in centre, each with a small countersunk hole in the centre to take a pencil point. To use the gauge, you simply choose a wheel of sufficient diameter to cover the widest point of the scribe and run the wheel along the surface to be traced; the pencil then replicates the profile on the workpiece. The Axminster Scribe and Trace and the memorably named Trend Perfect Butt, meanwhile, work on the same principle as Veritas – a set of discs with a pencil in the

middle, albeit in a more sophisticated holder.

Both the Trend and Axminster wheels offer more scope for setting out more complex scribes than the Veritas. Both have a wheel that corresponds to the offset of a 1/2in router cutter with a 30mm guide bush. For a simple kit to keep to hand, the Veritas will undertake most basic scribing jobs, lacking only the offset for a worktop jig set-up. While the Axminster is capable of more involved work and equals the Trend's performance, it's the PerfectButt that I'd hang on to, if only for the free-running wheels that rotate as you scribe.



Veritas Offset Wheel Gauges
Rating ★★★★★



Axminster Scribe and Trace
Rating ★★★★★

Trend Perfect Butt
Rating ★★★★★

Trend Offset Scribe
Rating ★★★★★

