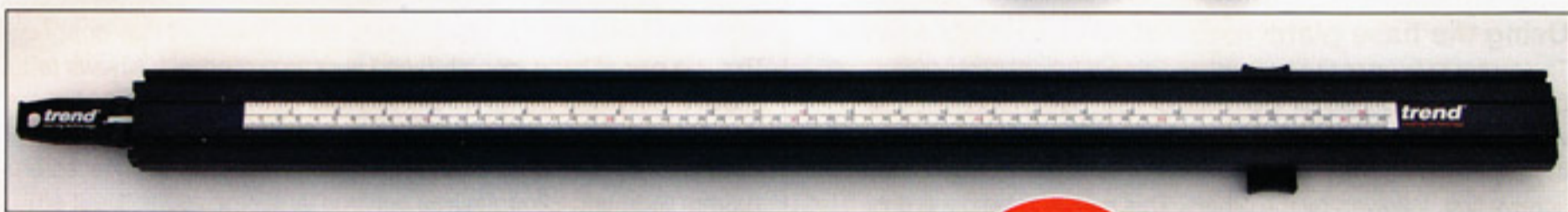


The Varijig system from Trend allows the quick and accurate guiding of tools, such as routers, saws and drills, in a straight line. Based around a clamp guide rail, the system has a wide range of accessories. The items tested here were selected with the use of a hand-held router in mind

# Trend Varijig system



## Varijig clamp guide

£29

The Varijig clamp guide tested has jaws that open to 610mm wide. Other versions are available that span 915mm, 1270mm and an impressive 2440mm. The clamp body is made from extruded aluminium with a tough black finish. The extrusion has three T-slots along the top and a pair of plain slots underneath, for use by the various accessories. A metric-imperial scale slides into the central T-slot.

The hand lever on the clamp guide has four indent positions that control the amount of force applied between the fixed and sliding jaw. The jaw faces are made from a hard plastic and are dimpled to enhance their grip. The jaws also have pairs of holes for use when fitting accessories.

### Using the guide

Hold the protruding side tabs to slide the jaw smoothly against the work. The jaw ingeniously locks in position when gentle pressure is applied to its face and releases when this pressure is removed. When it's aligned in position, move the lever between indents and the guide securely grips the

work. The lever produces a large movement of the jaws during its first stage of travel – a neat touch! There was no discernible deflection of the clamp body when it was tightened.

The scale is supplied unfitted. I zeroed the scale relative to the fixed jaw and fastened it in position using 20mm of its self-adhesive backing. The scale is well protected by its slot and feels durable. I found the scale most useful when adjusting the position of the 'stop block' accessory.

The jaw faces are 14mm tall (and 36mm wide) so the clamp guide easily grips panels 15mm thick or greater and will also rest flat on the workbench. The dimpled jaws could mark finished work, so use some buffer material or the wide jaws accessory kit (see overleaf).

### Summing up

This clamp guide is very effective. The sliding jaw moves freely, locking and releasing consistently. The lever works quickly and the dimpled jaws have the strong grip, essential for precise routed work. **DR**



The clamp guide's sliding jaw moves freely and locks and releases consistently

### VERDICT

This clamp guide is very effective and easy to use.

**PROS** ■ Good design and build quality  
■ Excellent grip

**CONS** ■ Jaw dimples could mark work

**VALUE FOR MONEY** ■■■■■  
**PERFORMANCE** ■■■■■

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend
- 01923 249911
- [www.trend-uk.com](http://www.trend-uk.com)



## Varijig router base plate



The router base plate and clamp guide allow accurate joints to be routed

The Varijig router base plate fits the router to the clamp guide and aids routing cuts in a perfect straight line. It has a clear plastic base with a black plastic head that hooks over a slot on the clamp guide. The base has pre-drilled holes spaced to mount a standard mid-size plunge router, such as the Trend T5 model. Spaced equally along the edge of the head are eight adjustable grub screws for removal of backlash when fitted to the clamp guide.

£18

### Using the base plate

The router is fixed to the base plate using a pair of screws and can be speedily detached for a change of use. Removal of backlash was straightforward by careful adjustment of the grub screws using the supplied Allen key. I found it easiest to adjust the two outer screws first, followed by the others. This needs to be done only once and is very effective. Afterwards the router base plate still easily engages and disengages in the slot on the clamp guide.

When the base plate is engaged with the clamp guide, the underside of the clear plastic base slides flush over the work and gives the router excellent stability.

Alignment of the router cutter to the cutting line requires small adjustments of the clamp guide position, by checking the router location at each end of the required cut before clamping it tight. While cutting, the clear base gives a good view of progress and where the cut will proceed – handy for stopped cuts.

Of course, vacuum extraction is needed; otherwise the view becomes obscured. When cutting a rebate I found it useful to support the overhanging base plate using some material of similar thickness to the work.

### VERDICT

I expect to use the router plate and clamp guide combination a lot in my workshop.

**PROS** ■ Clever design  
■ Excellent build quality

**CONS** ■ None

**VALUE FOR MONEY** ■■■■■  
**PERFORMANCE** ■■■■■

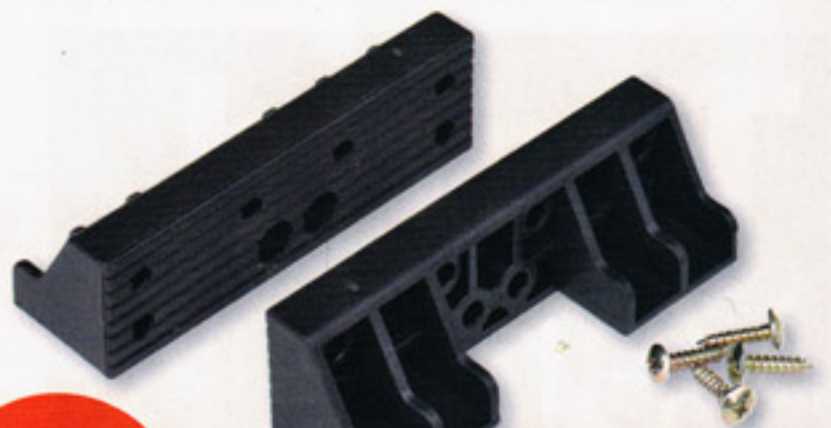
### FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

### Summing up

The router base plate is probably the most useful accessory for the clamp guide. It provides a great way to rout straight grooves and rebates quickly and accurately. It's well designed and easy to use. **DR**

## Varijig wide jaw kit



£7

The wide jaw prevents damage to the workpiece while cutting a broad housing joint



This is a pair of large smooth-faced jaws, supplied with screws to attach them to the clamp guide. To avoid clamping marks on the work being held, each jaw has six pre-drilled holes for attaching additional spreaders to increase the contact area. The jaw faces are 105mm wide and 32mm tall.

### Using the jaws

The wide jaws slip over the standard jaws on the Trend clamp guide. They are moulded from a tough plastic and are well engineered, with plenty of thick reinforcing webs. When clamped, the jaws still have a very firm grip on the work. Their 32mm height works well for gripping thicker work that can rest flat on the workbench. However, they do reduce the maximum clamping span by 26mm.

### Summing up

This is a useful, easy to use and well designed accessory for your clamp guide. It's worth having on hand for when clamp marks on the workpiece would be a concern. The option of adding additional spreaders is a neat feature. **DR**

### VERDICT

This is a well-designed accessory for the clamp guide.

**PROS** ■ Ideal for larger and finished work  
■ Unlikely to mark wood

**CONS** ■ None

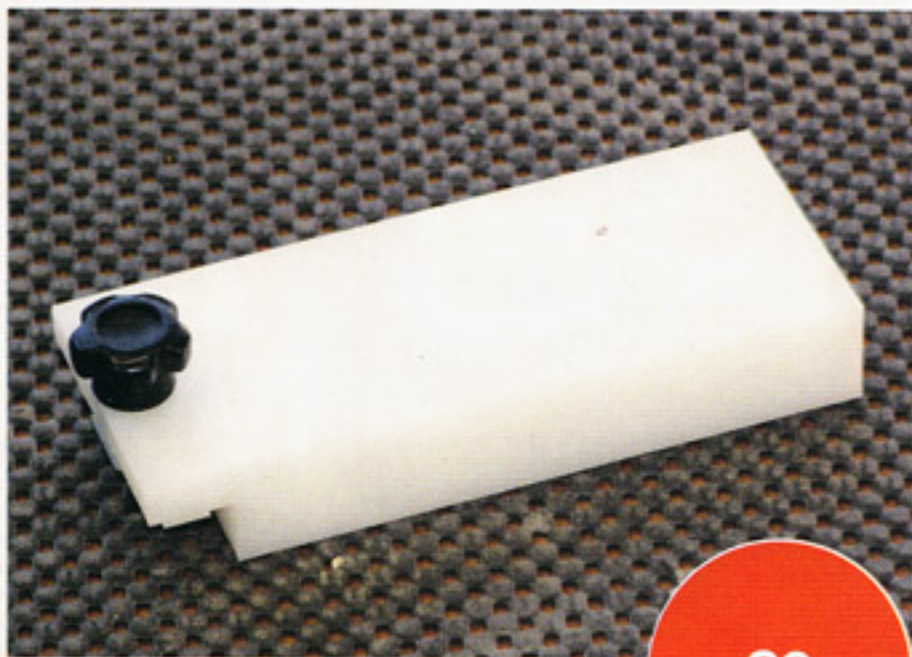
**VALUE FOR MONEY** ■■■■■  
**PERFORMANCE** ■■■■■

### FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81



## Varijig end stop block

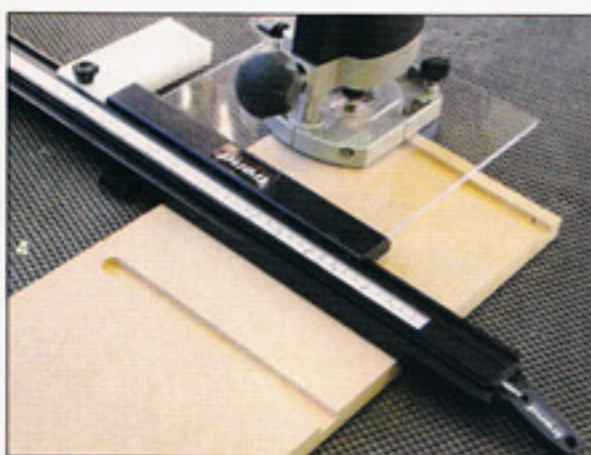


£9

The Varijig end stop block is a simple accessory designed to limit the travel of the tool along the clamp guide. It's made from a piece of solid white plastic that has been carefully machined to engage with the T-slot on the clamp guide. A knob and T-bolt locks the stop block into position.

### Using the block

The stop block fits onto the clamp guide with no discernible flex. The block slides smoothly and fine adjustments in position are



Multiple stopped housing joints like these are easily cut using the stop block

### VERDICT

This is a simple, well-designed accessory.

**PROS** ■ Well engineered  
■ Easy to use

**CONS** ■ Quite expensive for what it is

**VALUE FOR MONEY** ■■■■■  
**PERFORMANCE** ■■■■■

### FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

## Varijig squaring attachment



£9

The Varijig squaring attachment is designed to help square up the clamp guide against the work. The attachment is effectively an extra-wide jaw made from tough plastic, with a dimpled face measuring 13mm tall and 178mm wide. It fits over the standard fixed jaw and also engages into the slots underneath the clamp guide, and is secured to the guide with two screws.

### Using the attachment

Before use, the attachment requires a pair of holes to be drilled in the underside of the clamp guide. When fitting it, hold the attachment tight against the standard jaw face, and screw it to the clamp guide. The attachment also has some moulded protrusions that engage into both slots underneath the clamp guide. These provide additional mechanical support that will help it withstand knocks and bumps in the workshop.

With the attachment fitted the guide rail is quicker to align. For fine work you would still need to check alignment and make any small adjustments in position before tensioning the clamp guide.



The squaring attachment is fitted to the base of the clamp guide

### VERDICT

This is another clever addition to the Varijig range, but us hardly essential.

**PROS** ■ Quicker initial alignment on work

**CONS** ■ The need to drill two holes in your clamp guide

**VALUE FOR MONEY** ■■■■■  
**PERFORMANCE** ■■■■■

### FURTHER INFORMATION

■ See panel on page 81

### Summing up

This is a good idea and helps initial alignment on the work, but an alignment check is still beneficial if carrying out precise work. DR