

RE-SAWING

Tuning your band saw for successful results

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L. Re-sawing with an auxiliary fence.
R. Auxiliary fence made from 16mm melamine faced chipboard - slips snugly over the saw's supplied fence.

My relationship with my band saw has been tenuous at best. Successful re-sawing (ripping slices along the long grain) for box components has depended on a 30% thickness allowance for waste. 3 mm veneers? Forget it!

It was only after a full time two week course at The New Zealand School of Fine Woodworking that it came together. Instruction focused on clamping a high shop made fence parallel to the saw blade's drift. Suddenly I found myself ripping high work pieces to 2 - 3 mm thickness with only light sanding required for clean up.

On returning home I was pleased to find that this new found expertise worked on my Carba-Tech 17" clunker. This summarises the essentials, its not definitive, but it works for me.

1. Blade selection

A one inch blade, 3 tooth per inch, deep gullet, light set. This configuration pulls the work piece into the blade leaving you to focus on guiding, not pushing.

2. Blade Tracking

Centre the blade on the large upper wheels "rubber". Release some blade tension if this is difficult, then re-tension. Tension? Pretty firm works well for me and that's how the school did it.

3. Adjust the fence for blade drift

Drift is the tendency of the saw blade to track the work piece off-square. Unless you do this you are essentially free hand cutting, and can look forward to concave cuts and tapering pieces. Drift compensation is the essential key to accurate re-sawing. The side bar (below) explains how to do this. It is very easy with the fences supplied on modern band saws.

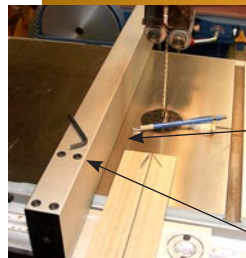
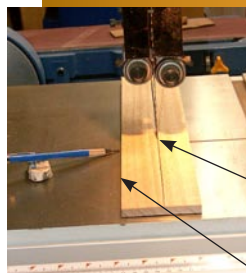
4. Make a tall auxiliary fence for tall work pieces.

I clamp the out feed end of the saw's fence to the table.

Cutting

Apply right hand pressure to the workpiece just above centre height and just behind the blade to ensure top of work piece is hard against fence. Push lightly with your left hand. (See main top pic). Switch to a paddle and push stick when appropriate to safety.

Setting your band saw fence to compensate for blade drift.



• Rip a 16mm piece of MDF to about 10 cm wide. Use a steel rule to draw a pencil line parallel to one edge.

• Freehand feed the MDF to the band saw closely following the line. Stop when you are halfway through. Do not let the MDF move until you have completed the next step.

• Draw a pencil line on the band saw table, along the left hand edge of the MDF (top pic). You now have a drift line. Remove the work piece.

• Bring the saw's fence up to this line, lock it, loosen the four set screws and tap the fence until it is parallel to the pencilled drift line (bottom pic). Lock the set screws and your done!