GRAINBENCH ORIGINAL | CONFIDENT BEGINNER

The Quiet Morning Lap Desk

A plywood lap desk that straddles your legs on the couch or in bed, with a rear brace that keeps it square.



SIZE	SKILL	TIME	JOINERY
24 in wide, 14-1/2 in deep, 9-1/4 in tall	Confident beginner	About 2 to 3 hours, plus finish drying	Pocket screws and glue

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01 / MATERIALS AND TOOLS

What to buy.

LUMBER AND SHEET GOODS

BUY	USED FOR
1 x 1x3 board, 4 ft (or an offcut at least 22 in long)	R rear brace
1 x 3/4 plywood, 2 ft x 4 ft panel	S sides, T top

All three plywood parts fit on a 2 x 4 ft project panel. Measure the space you will straddle; the clear width between the sides is 21 in and the height under the top is 8-1/2 in.

HARDWARE AND SUPPLIES

ITEM	AMOUNT
1-1/4 in coarse-thread pocket-hole screws	12, plus a few spares
Wood glue	Small bottle of interior wood glue
Sandpaper	120 and 180 grit
Finish	About 250 mL (half a pint) of paint, stain or clear water-based polyurethane
Felt strips (optional)	2, for the side bottoms

TOOLS

- Circular saw with a straight-edge guide, or have the store cut the plywood
- Pocket-hole jig set for 3/4 in stock, with its stepped bit and a #2 square driver bit
- Drill/driver
- Tape measure, pencil and a combination or speed square
- 2 clamps that open to at least 24 in
- Sander or sanding block
- Safety glasses and hearing protection

02 / CUT LIST

Cut the parts.

Cut the top T and both sides S, checking that the sides are the same height so the desk sits level.

ID	PART	QTY	LENGTH	WIDTH	THICK	FROM
T	Top	1	24 in	14-1/2 in	3/4 in	3/4 plywood
S	Sides	2	8-1/2 in	14-1/2 in	3/4 in	3/4 plywood
R	Rear brace	1	21 in	2-1/2 in	3/4 in	1x3

CUTTING DIAGRAMS

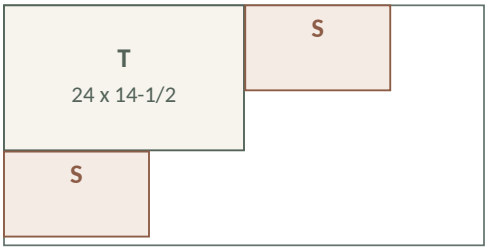
1x3 x 4 ft

22 in used, including 1 in to square the end and 1/8 in per cut

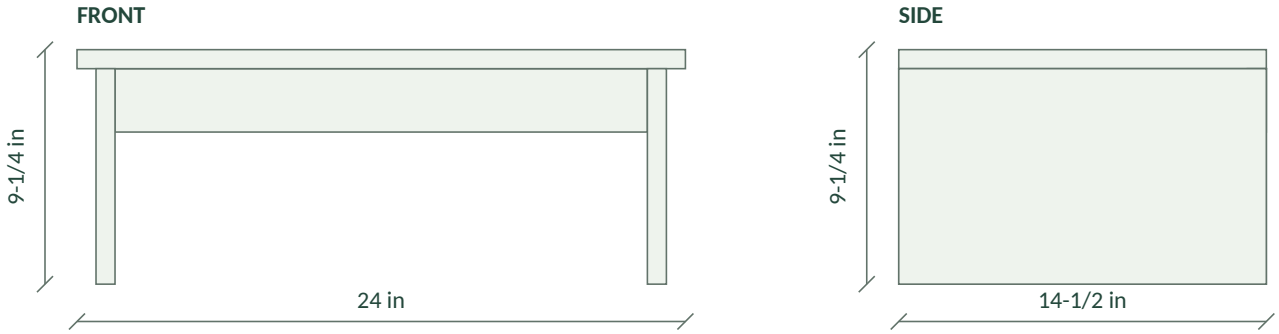


3/4 plywood, 2 ft x 4 ft

Long edge runs left to right. Allow 1/8 in between parts for the saw.



FINISHED SIZE



The sides sit 3/4 in in from each end of the top, flush front and back. The brace fits between them at the back, flush with their tops.

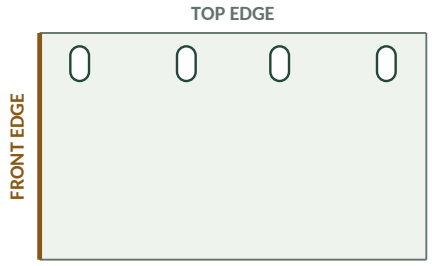
03 / BUILD

Put it together.

STEP 1 Drill the pocket holes

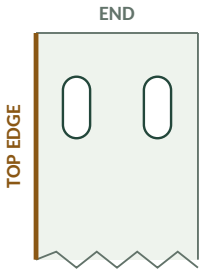
Drill 4 pocket holes along the top edge of each **S** on the inside face, and 2 at each end of **R** on its back face.

S **Sides**
Inside face, top edge



4 per side | 8 total
1-1/2, 5-1/2, 9, 13 in from front edge

R **Rear brace**
Back face

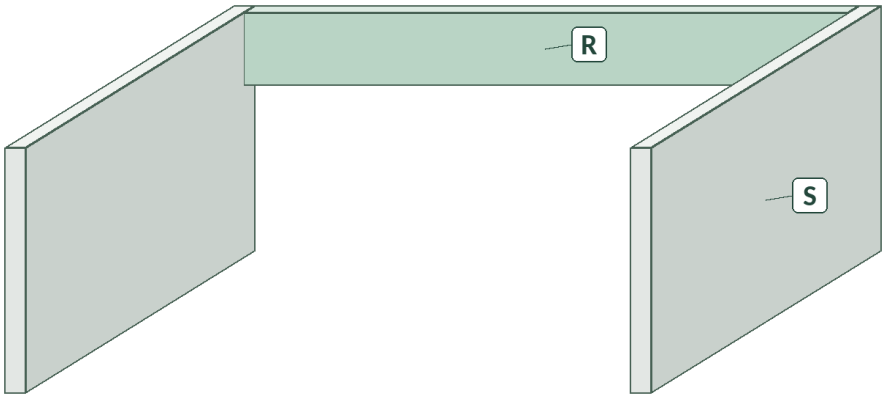


Same at the other end
2 at each end | 4 total
5/8, 1-7/8 in from top edge

Ovals = pocket-hole entries, enlarged. Not a drilling template.

STEP 2 Fit the brace

Glue and clamp **R** between the two sides at the back, flush with their tops and back edges, and drive 4 screws. The outside width should be 22-1/2 in.

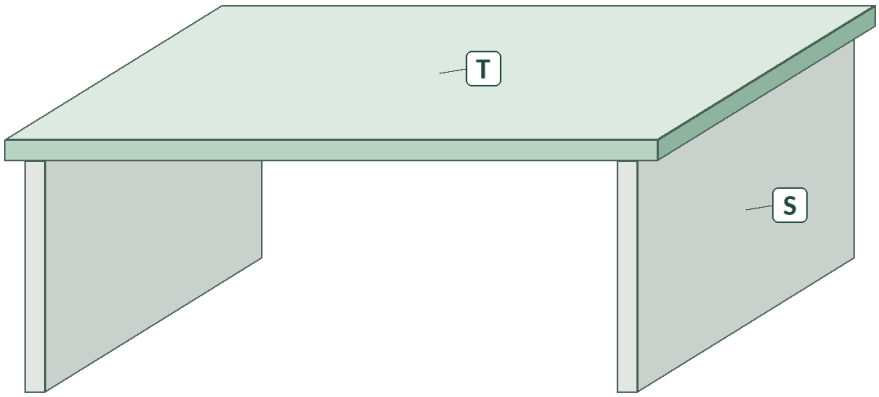


GREEN: added in this step | GREY: already in place

03 / BUILD, CONTINUED

STEP 3 Attach the top

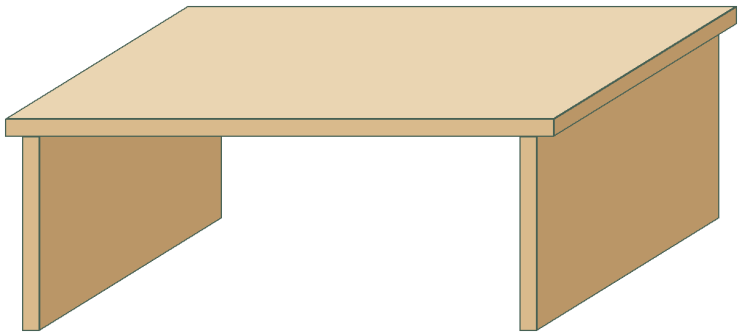
Lay **T** face down, centre the frame on it with 3/4 in overhang at each end, flush front and back, and drive the 8 screws into the top.



GREEN: added in this step | GREY: already in place

STEP 4 Finish

Round all the edges, sand, seal the plywood edges with your finish, and add felt strips under the sides.



CARE

For a laptop, book or breakfast plate. Keep hot drinks in a mug with a stable base, and do not sit or lean on it.

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Dimensions, part counts and cutting layouts were checked digitally. The plan has not been load-tested.