

Miter Guides for Router Tables



Q I just bought one of your router tables [#10.50.01, Highland Router Table Kit], and now I find it doesn't have a slot for a miter guide. How did you forget something so basic?

A Actually, we didn't forget it—we left it out on purpose. Most likely you think of a miter guide as you contemplate milling across the end of a piece, such as in frame and panel construction, where the ends of the rails are routed to mate with the edges of the stiles. Width of cut is set by the ball bearing pilot on the router bit, so a miter guide puts you through an awkward song & dance: you must slide the rail along the guide to cut into the end of the rail until it contacts the bearing, carefully climb cut back to the leading edge, finish the cut to the trailing edge, and then deal with the tearout that concludes the exercise. There *has* to be a better way—and there is.



Guard *actually* removed for clarity

A “follow block” registered against your table fence gets the job done much faster, with flawless accuracy, no tearout, and virtually no chance of inadvertently running the cut around a corner and botching the job. A follow block is nothing fancier than a piece of scrap stock, plywood or solid, with two straight edges perhaps 8” or longer that meet at 90°. Use a straightedge across your fence's bit opening to set the fence flush with the bit's ball bearing (note that fence direction is irrelevant). Holding your rail stock firmly against the front edge of the follow block so the two act as a single unit, slide it along the fence and across the bit. Presto! Flip the rail around and cut the other end two seconds later. Almost any cut on end grain works better with a follow block than with a miter guide.

You will need a miter guide, however, when you're making cuts such as dados across the body of a workpiece. If your work regularly calls for a guide, mount one of our Fasttrak adjustable miter tracks against the front edge of your table. For occasional use, a stray square foot of 3/4” plywood and a 20” 1x2 will do the deed. Make one edge of the plywood straight, and mount the 1x2 precisely perpendicular under the adjacent edge. Shape the plywood for comfort and secure grip, and glue a strip of sandpaper along the leading edge—remember that the bit will pull your work inward along the guide, so be prepared.

