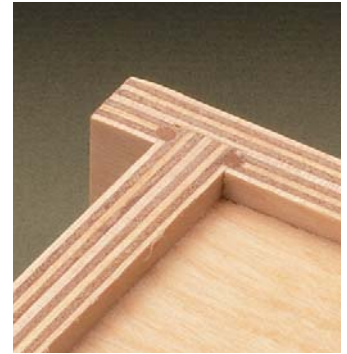


Locking Dowels for Dadoes

A recent project for my shop called for quite a few drawers. To make the project as quick as possible, I simply cut dados in all the drawer fronts to accept the sides. After I completed the project, I found the dado joints just weren't as strong as I would have liked them to be. So next time I tried something new.

I wanted a joint that was easy to make and would also stand up to heavy use. So I tried "beefing" up my dado joint with a pair of dowels that lock each joint like a key, see photo.



After assembling each drawer, I drill a small hole on each joint line, as shown in Fig. 1. Then I insert and glue a short dowel into the hole to form a "locking" pin.

Choose a dowel size about a fourth the thickness of your drawer front. With 1/2"-thick stock, I used a 1/8"-dia. dowel. And don't worry about cutting them to perfect length. Just trim them flush with a chisel after they're glued in. (Fig. 1a).

Since most small drill bits are short, you'll only be able to insert a small length of the dowel into the joint. So repeat the process on both the top and bottom of the drawer (Fig. 2).

