

Small Parts Clamp

Sometimes I need to grind or sand small bolts, screws, or wood parts for a project. I've tried to use a pair of locking pliers to hold the pieces, but these tend to mar the surface of the part I am working on.

To solve this problem, I made a small-parts clamp out of wood. The soft jaws hold objects firmly without marring them. And since it's made out of wood, it doesn't transfer heat the way metal jaws would.



Here's how it works. A small hardwood wedge fits into the back end of the clamp. This allows the front jaws of the clamp to "bite" down on the object that is being held. The further the wedge is pushed in, the tighter the grip. A bolt and wing nut hold everything together.

To make the clamp, all you need is a short length of dowel, a scrap of hardwood for the wedge, a bolt and wing nut, and a few washers. Start by drilling the hole for your bolt through the center of the uncut dowel. Then round off one end of the dowel with a disk or belt sander for the front jaws of the clamp. After cutting the dowel lengthwise on a band saw, place the washers between the jaws to act as spacers.

