

Sanding a Solid wood Panel Flat

One of the quickest and most effective ways to flatten a glued-up, solid-wood panel is to use a belt sander to remove the high spots. This involves sanding both across the grain and with the grain.

MARK HIGH SPOTS. First you'll need to locate the "high" spots. To do this, set a straightedge on the panel and shine a light underneath it (Fig. 1). The light will be visible in the low areas. Now use a pencil to mark the high spots.

SAND ACROSS GRAIN. After marking the high spots, load an 80-grit sanding belt and place the sander flat on the work piece with it turned off. Now to remove the high spots, guide the sander back and forth *across* the grain over the pencil marks (Fig. 2). This way the sander rides on top of the high spots and quickly grinds them down.

Although it's tempting to apply downward pressure, let the weight of the sander do the work instead. Just be sure to keep the sander flat and moving all the time. Once all of the pencil marks are gone, turn the sander off and check your progress using the straightedge and light again.

SANDING IT SMOOTH. Sanding across the grain is going to create some scratches. To get rid of them, mount a 120-grit belt and sand the entire surface *with* the grain (Fig. 3). Any really fine scratches that remain after belt sanding can be removed with a finish sander or by hand.

