

Q. Zero clearance inserts: a woodworker is making zero clearance inserts for a dado, and he wonders what kind of wood should he use and whether he should cut the slot in with a jigsaw or clamp the insert in the table and slowly raise the blade?

(Michael Dresdner) "I do it the latter way. I clamp the insert in place and slowly raise the blade. Works great. I like to use either oak or maple for durability, since the abrasive action of the blades throwing swarf erodes the front of the insert in time. I've also used MDF on occasion, and it, too, works rather well. And if you are really flush, buy some UHMW plastic (such as polypropylene). It outlasts most everything."



(Rob Johnstone) "I've used various types of hardwood with good success (the more dense, the better). And while it may not be the safest way to make the slot, I use the raise-the-blade-slowly technique ? and still have all my digits nearly intact."

(Ian Kirby) "Use quartersawn hardwood or plywood or even MDF. The surface doesn't have to be particularly hard, but it does have to be flush and solid in its seatings. Clamp it in place and raise the blade through it. Or you can check out page 43 of my tome 'The Accurate Router'"