Raised Panels on the Table Saw

A router table makes quick work of cutting raised panels. But an alterative to buying expensive router bits to do this is to cut them on your table saw. Here are a couple of tips to make the job go easier, so you'll end up with smooth, clean bevels and square shoulders.

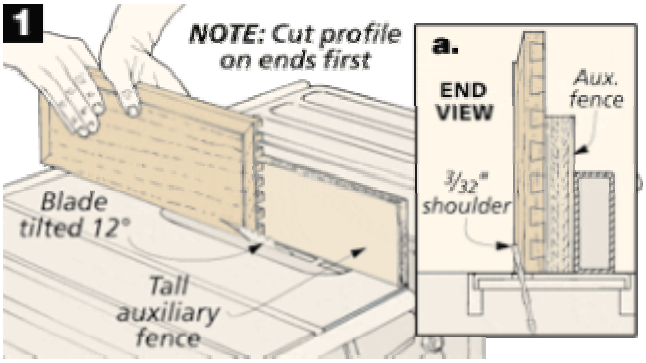
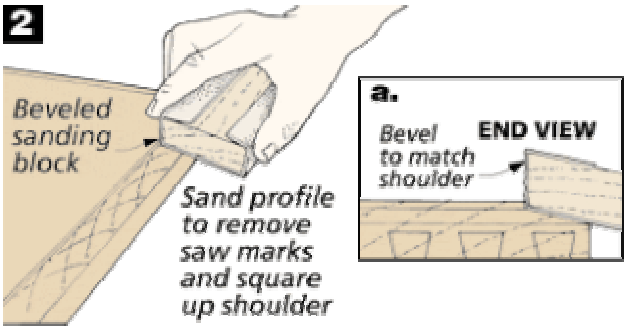


Table Saw Setup. Cutting the bevels on the long edges of a panel is no problem. But when you stand the pieces on end, it's a good idea to have the extra support.

With the auxiliary fence in place, tilt the saw blade (12°) and raise it to the desired height (Fig. 1). (Mine ended up 3/4".) Then using a test piece, you can sneak up on the position of the fence until the shoulder profile is created (Fig. 1a).



Now that the fence is set, you can begin cutting the bevels. I like to cut across the short, end grain edges first. This way, if there's any chipout near the tail end of the bevel, it will be removed when the bevel is cut on the longer face grain edges.

Sanding. Even a sharp saw blade will probably leave some swirl marks, so after the raised panels have been cut, the last step is to sand the bevels. But there's one area that needs some extra attention. Since the blade was tilted, the shoulder will be slightly undercut. To square this up, I made a sanding block that has a bevel cut on one edge (Figs. 2 and 2a).