

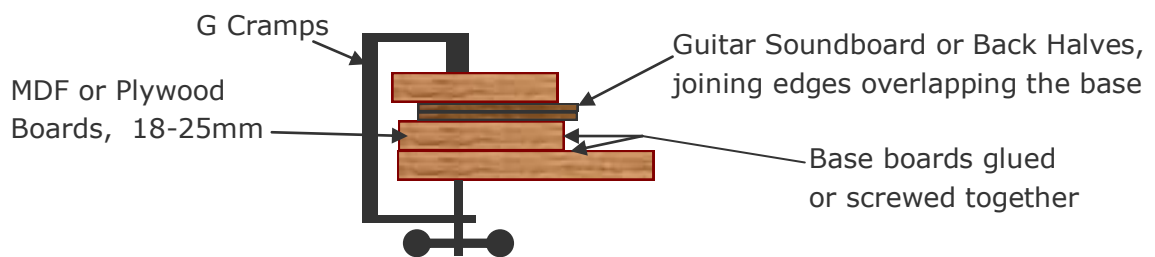


How To Series

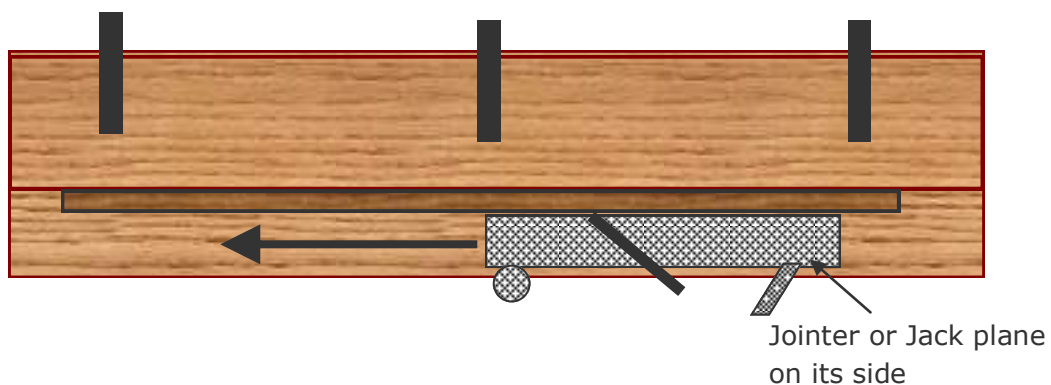
Joining a 2 Piece Soundboard or Guitar Back

Soundboards and guitar backs are thin and the joint between the two book-matched halves is critical to the integrity of the instrument. Following these simple steps should produce a reliable and strong joint.

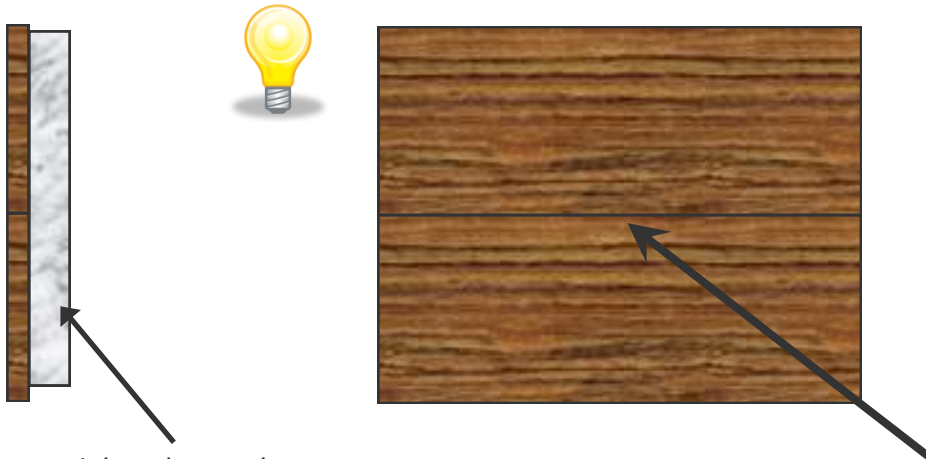
The first job is to create a perfectly straight planed edge, perpendicular to the face of the boards. Using a shooting board makes this task easier.



Top View



Sharpen the plane blade and adjust it to take a fine cut. Slide the plane on its side along the full length of the soundboard or guitar back edge, applying pressure against the edge. After several passes, remove the boards from the shooting board and test the straightness of the joint.

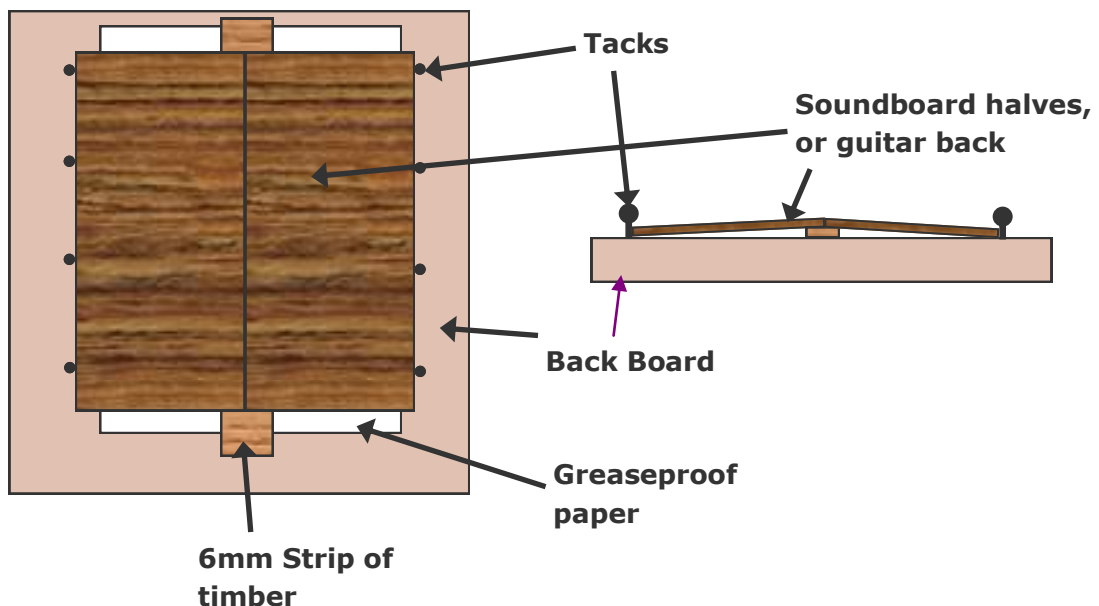


Hold a straight edge to the faces to check the planed edges are square.

Sight along the joint to highlight gaps

If there are any gaps or the edges are not square, place the boards back in the shooting board and repeat with several more passes of the plane. Repeat the checks until you are happy you have a good joint.

Now you are ready to glue the boards together. For this you'll need a flat board, larger than the soundboard or back, some greaseproof paper, some tacks and a thin strip of wood around 6mm thick.

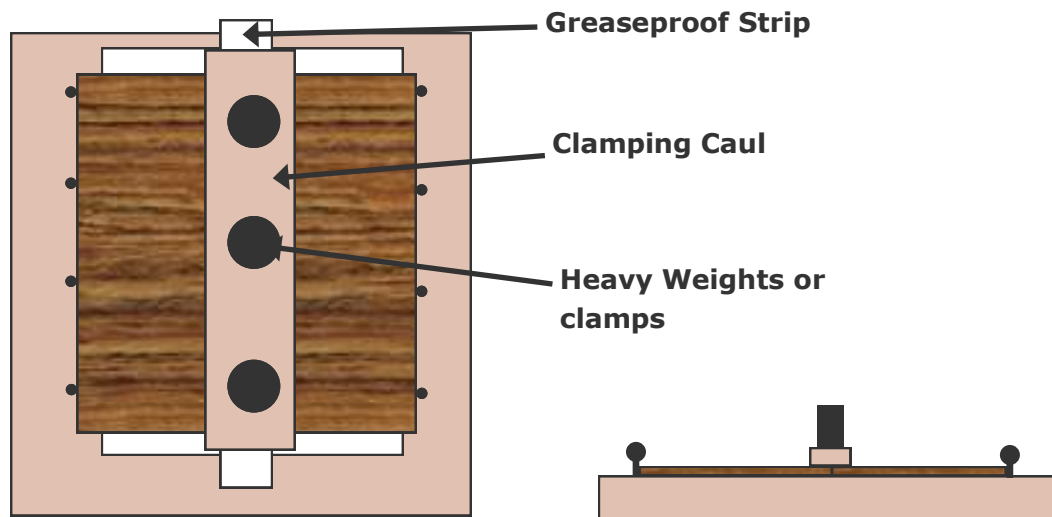


Nail one row of tacks into the back board. Place the greaseproof on the board followed by the 6mm strip down the centre. Now position the two halves to be joined side by side, joining edges together so that the joint is raised up by the 6mm strip and one edge is tight up against the row of tacks. Holding the joining edges together, nail another row of tacks tight up against the other edge of the second half.

Now slide the 6mm strip out from under the sides and gently press down along the centreline so that the two halves now lay flat. This should give enough "clamping" pressure to hold the boards tight together. If the boards are not pressed together then try the process again using a thicker centre strip. If they are too tight, use a thinner centre strip. Once you are happy with this dry assembly, replace the 6mm strip, apply a line of glue along one edge, align the two joining edges, remove the strip and press the two halves flat.

It is advisable to apply downward pressure along the length of the join while the glue dries. Lay a strip of greaseproof paper along the join and either clamp a centre caul or use heavy weights on a caul to press the boards down onto the back board.

Leave the glued assembly for a couple of hours, then release the boards by removing one row of tacks. Leave the glued board overnight.



When the glue is dry, scrape off any squeeze-out with a sharp scraper blade or chisel taking care not to gouge into the timber. You can now plane or sand the board to thickness before shaping.