

Glass Cutting and Assembly Jig

A simple jig makes cutting and fitting stained glass easier, safer, and more accurate.

Building the Arts & Crafts-style lamp requires learning a few basic skills for working with glass. While researching the techniques needed for the project, I had a chance to watch a pro at work. He could line up a cut with a straightedge, scribe it with the glass cutter, and snap it perfectly on the line in a matter of seconds.

My own experience made it clear that I'd need a little help to get the best results. That's where the jig shown below comes in.

THE JIG. It starts with a flat, plywood worksurface. I glued a long fixed fence on the edge to keep the pieces square. Finally, I attached a shorter cleat cut to match the width of the panels I was making for the lamp.

CUTTING. The fence and cleat help hold the glass in place so you can line up a cut and mark it. Then, you can use a metal rule or piece of stock cut to the required width to guide the glass cutter. Using this technique, I cut all the pieces to the proper width.

When it came to making the perpendicular, length cuts I used a small square to guide the glass cutter and scribe the lines. In both cases, you'll need a good snapping motion to break the glass on the lines. It's easy to get the hang of it.

ASSEMBLY. I also used the jig for assembling the panels. The fence and cleat kept the individual pieces aligned. A couple pieces of tape on the outside edge hold the panels in place while you solder the joints.

