

FamilyFun

Picnic Table Plans

Made out of a single sheet of plywood, it's also portable! • By Kevin Ayer



Materials

One 4- by 8-foot sheet of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch AC plywood
Twelve $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wood screws
Primer and exterior paint

Tools

Tape measure, straightedge or carpenter's square, pencil, coffee can with 4-inch diameter, safety glasses, leather work gloves, jigsaw, 100-grit sandpaper, vibrator sander or sanding block, file, electric drill, paintbrush

This children's picnic table would be a marvel if all it did was provide kids with an irresistible spot for drawing, playing games, and eating birthday cake. But it offers so much more: it can be broken down in a matter of seconds (its pieces are ingeniously held together by interlocking slots) and stacked into an easily carried unit for storage or transport. If you know how to use a jigsaw, you can make a picnic table of your own in a weekend.

Getting a 4- by 8-foot sheet of plywood home from the lumberyard may be this project's most challenging step. Rather than wrestle with it whole, have the yard cut 3 pieces from it:

One 24- by 48-inch piece (call it Section A) for the tabletop

One 44 $\frac{1}{4}$ - by 48-inch piece (Section B) for the legs, tabletop support and cleats, and carrying clips

One 27- by 48-inch piece (Section C) for the seats and seat supports

If you want to save sawing time later, you can have the yard cut Sections A and B, plus the two 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ - by 48-inch seats and the two 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch by 48-inch seat supports.

Tips for Cutting, Sanding and Painting Plywood

1 Once you've drawn the straight cut lines, use a coffee can with a 4-inch diameter as a template to round off most of the corners, lay out the handles, and shape the feet. Use a dime to round off the slots in the table legs, as shown on the diagram for Section B.

2 Use a jigsaw equipped with a sharp wood blade that will allow you to make both straight and curved cuts. Support the plywood on a stable work surface, cut slowly, and let the blade do its work.

3 The most important cuts will be the 1-inch-wide slots for the interlocking joints. See the Tip in step 3 on page 98 for an easy way to keep the measurements and cuts as precise as possible. During assembly, you may have to use the jigsaw or file to widen some of the slots for a smooth fit.

4 Wear safety glasses so you can watch the blade and your

guidelines. Try to make smooth, continuous cuts to minimize sanding later. Wear leather work gloves to avoid getting splinters.



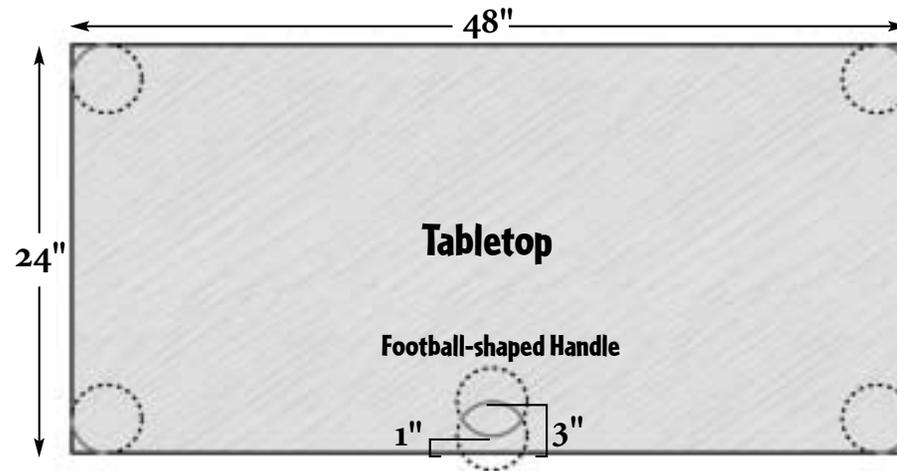
5 After you've cut your pieces, sand and round over the edges using 100-grit sandpaper, preferably on a sanding block or vibrator sander. Pay particular attention to the tabletop, seat edges, and handle cutouts.

6 When it's time to paint your picnic table, first apply a coat of quality exterior primer, then finish with 2 coats of exterior paint.

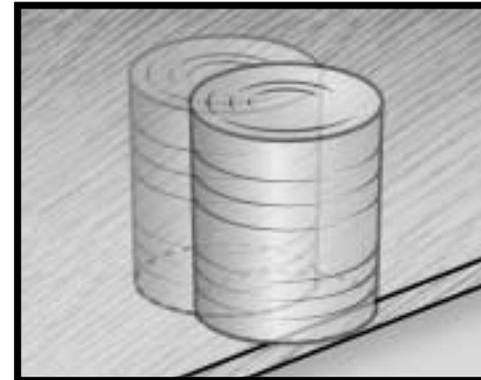
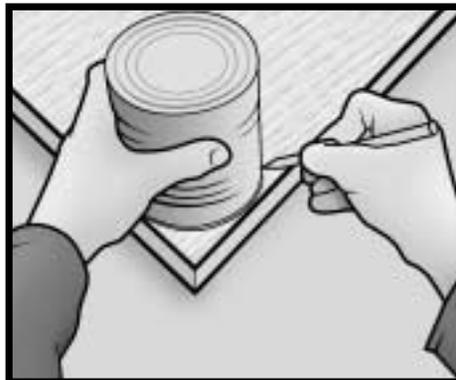
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Picnic Table To Go: Cutting Tabletop • By Kevin Ayer

Section A



1 Round the tabletop's 4 corners by tracing around the coffee can and then cutting along the curves (shaded in red).

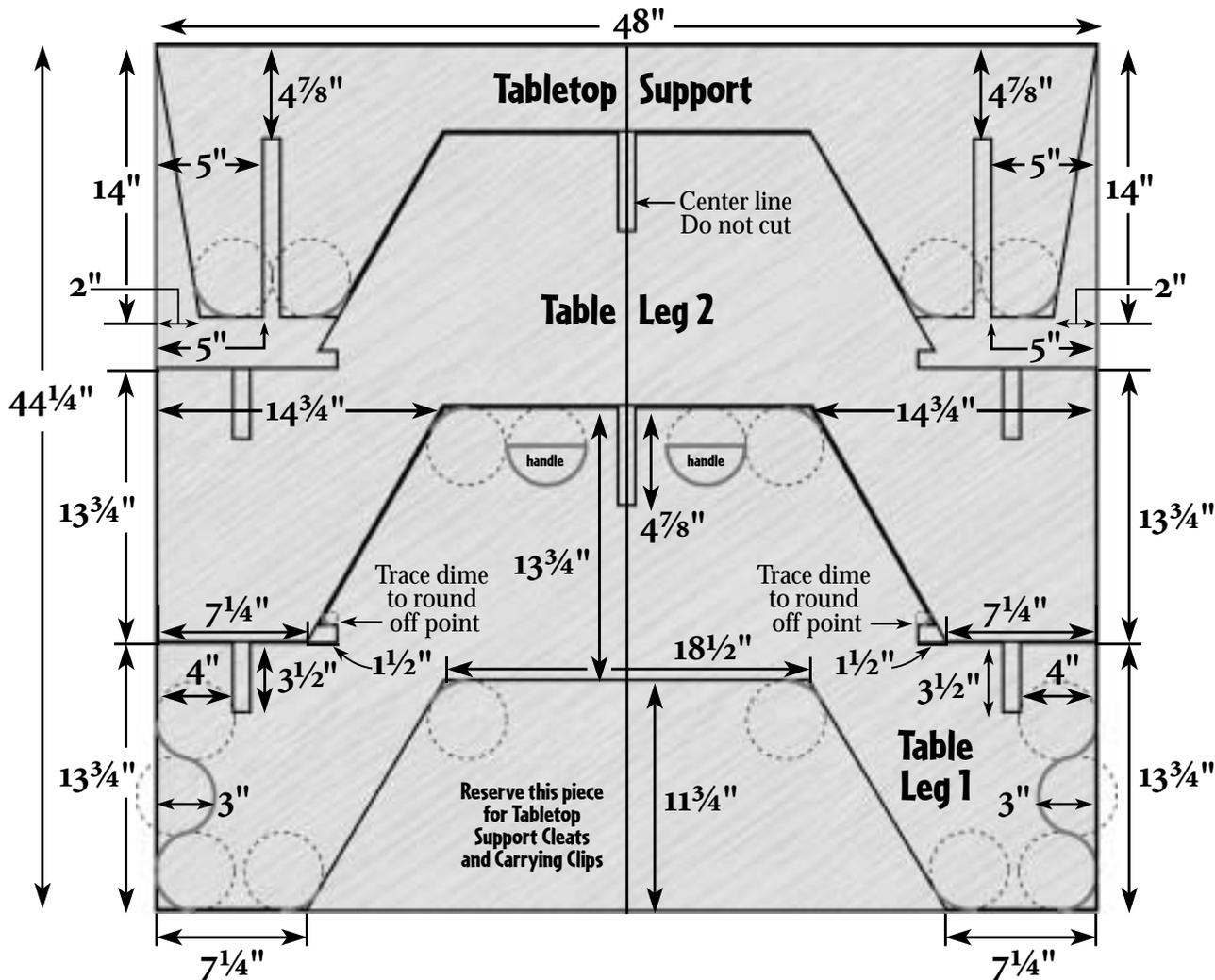


2 The football-shaped handle is a plus if you plan to carry your table often; otherwise, it can be omitted. Mark the handle with the coffee can (as shown at right), centering it horizontally on the board, then drill a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch starter hole within the football. Make smooth cuts so the handle will be comfortable to grip.

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Picnic Table To Go: Creating legs, Cleats • By Kevin Ayer

Section B



1 Draw a line down the middle of the board (2 feet from each side) — this is not a cut line, but will serve as a handy reference point for marking the pieces. Mark the cutting lines, as shown, again tracing around the coffee can. Darken the cut lines as indicated (in red) to create the curved edges and semicircle handles.

2 Cut out the piece of wood reserved for the tabletop support cleats and carrying clips. Mark and cut out the cleats as shown in the diagram below.



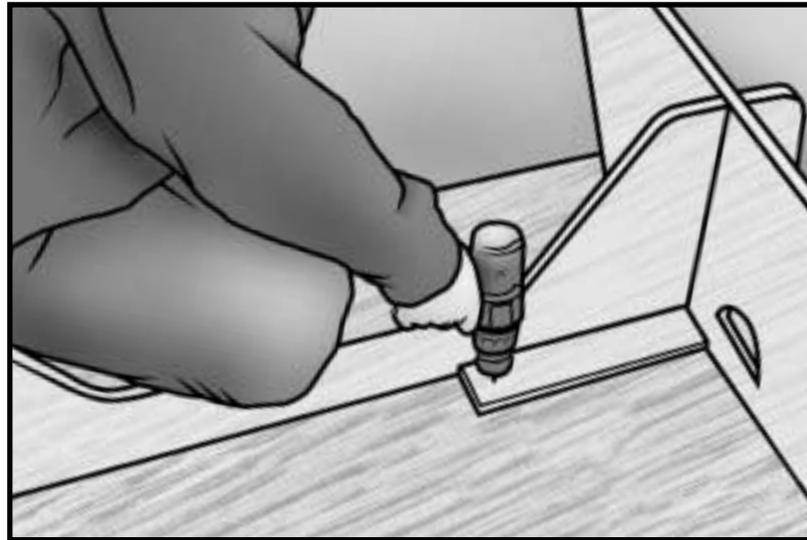
3 Now mark the slots on table leg 1 and the tabletop support. Tip: After marking the length of the slot along its outside edge, mark the width (3/4 inch) by setting one of the cleats on edge and using its thickness as a guide, as shown below right. When you cut out the slots, try to stay directly on the pencil lines so the openings won't be too tight or too loose. You can also drill a 3/8-inch hole at the deepest point of each slot to make it easier to turn the blade and clean out the corners.

4 Cut out table leg 1 and use it as a template for table leg 2. Again, use the cleat to make sure the width of the slots is exact. Finally, cut out table leg 2 and the tabletop support.

Measure and mark the 4 tabletop support cleats from the center line (here, also a cut line) and cut them out. Reserve the end pieces for the carrying clips (see Carrying Clips on page 148).

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Picnic Table To Go: Attaching Tabletop • By Kevin Ayer



1 Flip the tabletop so the underside is facing up. Fit together the table legs and tabletop support (see Assembling the Table, step 1, at right), then center the assembly upside down on the tabletop, as shown above.

2 To ensure a snug final fit, position the cleats so that each pair sandwiches the tabletop support and the short ends butt up against the inside of the table leg. Screw each cleat in place with 3 screws (pre-drilling may be necessary).

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Picnic Table To Go: Assembling the Table • By Kevin Ayer



1 Holding the 2 table legs upright, slide on the tabletop support, lining up the slots on the bottom of the support with those on the top of each table leg.



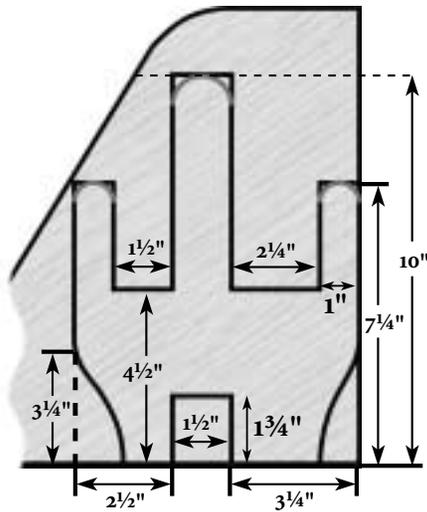
2 Slide on the 2 seat supports, inserting the slots into the table legs.



3 Fit the seats over the seat supports, tucking each seat's inside edge into the slots on the table legs and placing the end slots over the seat support tabs.

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Picnic Table To Go: Carrying Clips • By Kevin Ayer



Draw a carrying clip, as shown above, on one of the 2 pieces of wood reserved for the clips. Hand-draw the curves. Cut out the clip and use it as a template for the second clip.



The carrying clips allow you to easily transport the disassembled table. First, place both legs together, aligning the seat support slots. Insert the bottom slot of each clip into a pair of seat support slots, with the clips oriented in the same direction. You should now have 2 sets of hooks upon which to hang all but the tabletop.



On the wider set of hooks, place the tabletop support (flat edge down), 1 seat, and 1 seat support, locking the seat support onto the carrying clips. On the narrower hooks, place the other seat and seat support. Now you can use the half-circle handles to carry the clipped pieces (and the football handle to carry the tabletop). Note that if you tilt the assembly, some pieces could slide out.