

Router Table Starter Pin Makes Routing Smoother

Start with a starter pin

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Functioning much like a fulcrum, this router table accessory is as valuable as it is simple. Used in combination with bearing-piloted router bits, a starter pin lets you brace your workpiece for more precise and controlled freehand edgework.

You can buy metal and plastic starter pins, such as a brass version from Eagle America (\$4.99; eagle-america.com), but it's easy to make one from a dowel or a piece of steel rod. Pins should snugly fit the starter pin hole in the router table and need only reach about an inch above the table surface.

Starter pins are best mounted less than 2" from the outside edge of your bit. If you're using a homemade router table that's not predrilled for a starter pin, drill the pin hole slightly in front and to the right of the bit on the infeed side.



Brace yourself

Start your router and brace the workpiece against the pin. Pivot the starting corner of it firmly and smoothly toward the cutter. Keep your work pressed against the starter pin as the edge of your workpiece comes to rest against the bit's bearing, as shown above. Ease your workpiece away from the starter pin as the bearing takes over, feeding the raw edge into the bit in a counterclockwise motion, as shown *right*.

Instantly, you'll notice that a starting pin gives you added control of your workpiece during the critical point when the stock first touches the spinning bit. For safety's sake, use a push pad for small workpieces.



Once your workpiece is firmly in contact with the roller bearing, ease away from the pin for greater freedom of movement.