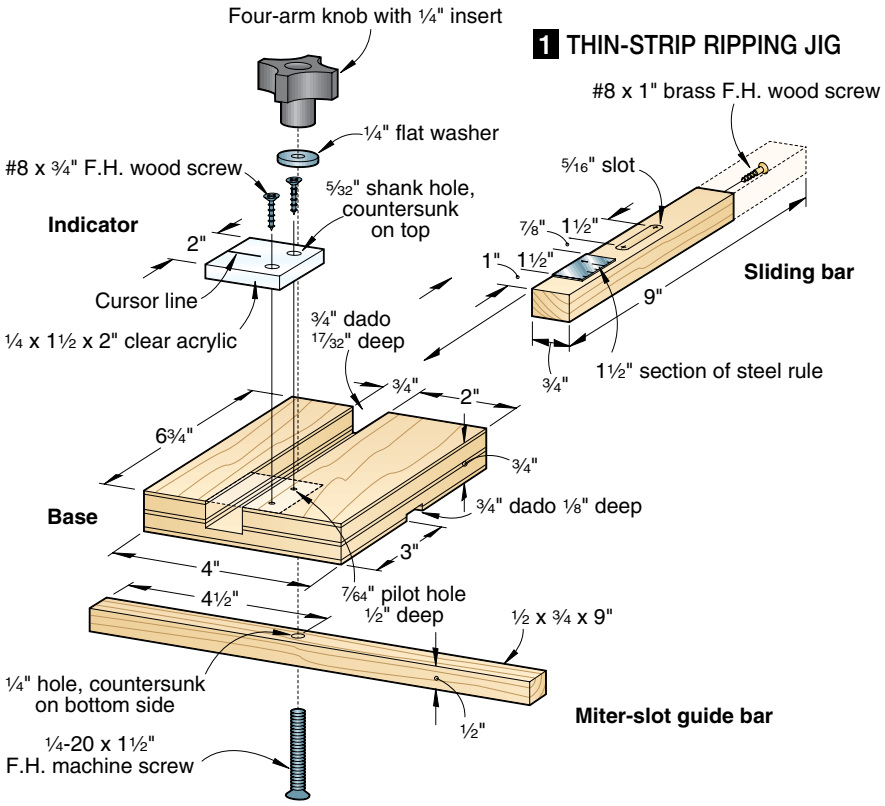
Simple, handy thin-strip ripping jig

Sometimes you need to rip several thin strips of wood to equal thickness to serve as edging, veneer, or bending stock, but slicing off thin stock on the fence side of the blade could prove unsafe. That's because it becomes awkward to use your blade guard and pushstick when you cut close to the fence. The solution: Run the wide portion of your workpiece between the fence and blade, cutting the strips on the side of the blade opposite the fence. You could accomplish this by measuring for each cut, but that's tedious and inaccurate. This thin-strip ripping jig does the job safely, accurately, and quickly.



First, build the jig

1 Cut a piece of ¾" plywood to the dimensions shown for the base on **Drawing 1**. Cut a dado on the bottom side of the base for the guide bar, where shown. Now, cut the ¾" dado on the top side of the base for the sliding bar.

2 Cut two pieces of maple to size for the miter-slot guide bar (adjust the dimensions shown if necessary to fit your tablesaw's slots) and the sliding bar. Center the miter-slot guide bar in the bottom dado, and glue it in place. Drill a pair of 5/16" holes in the sliding bar where shown, scrollsaw the material between them, and smooth the inside of the slot with a file.

3 Set the jig in your tablesaw's left miter-gauge slot. Place the sliding bar in the dado with its left end flush with the base. Slide the jig forward, and mark the point where a left-leaning sawblade tooth touches the bar. Make a second mark ½" closer to the base. Remove the bar, and crosscut it at the second mark.

4 Drill a 7/64" pilot hole in the sliding bar, centered on the end you just cut. Drive a brass screw halfway into the wood. (We used brass to avoid any chance of damaging a tablesaw blade.) You'll turn this screw in or out to fine-tune your jig's basic "zero" setting, or to adjust it for a blade of different thickness or with a different tooth set.

5 From the bottom side of the assembly, drill and countersink a ¼" hole through the miter-slot guide bar and base for the machine screw that holds the plastic knob. Sand all of the wood parts to 180 grit, and apply three coats of clear finish.

6 Make a mark 1" from the left end of the sliding bar. Cut the first 1½" from an inexpensive steel rule, align its left end with the mark, and attach it with epoxy.

7 Cut a piece of ¼" acrylic plastic to the dimensions shown for the indicator. Drill and countersink the two mounting holes, and scribe and mark a cursor line, as described in the caption of **Photo A**. Attach the indicator to the base, and add the knob.

Now, cut some strips

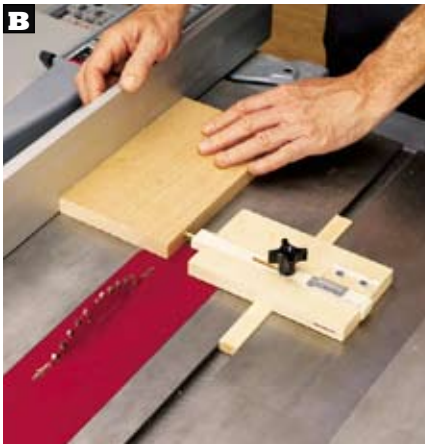
To cut a thin strip with the jig, place its guide bar in the left-hand miter gauge slot on your tablesaw. Loosen the knob, set the cursor to zero (the bottom end of the rule), and retighten the knob. Slide the jig so that the brass screw head is beside the saw blade. Turn the screw in or out with a screwdriver until the head lightly contacts a left-leaning tooth. Pull

To make a cursor, scribe a line across the middle of the acrylic indicator with a sharp knife and a combination square. Color the scribed line with a permanent marker. Wipe off the excess ink with a cloth or paper towel, leaving a fine line.

the jig toward you, loosen the knob, set the cursor for the desired strip thickness, and retighten the knob.

Position your workpiece against the rip fence, and move the fence to bring the left edge of the workpiece against the screw head, as shown in **Photo B**. Lock the fence in place, set the jig out of the way, and you're ready to cut a strip, as shown in **Photo C**.

After completing the cut, clean up the workpiece on the jointer. Replace the jig in the slot. Then unlock the rip fence, move it to bring the jointed edge against the screw head, lock the rip fence, remove the jig, and saw another strip. Repeat the process as many times as necessary to produce all of the strips that you need for your project.



Size your thin-strip ripping jig to suit your tablesaw, so that a 1" screw in the guide bar can contact the blade. Install a zero-clearance throat plate to prevent the sawn strip from falling into the saw.

Remove the jig before making the cut so the workpiece doesn't bind between the rip fence and the screw head. Replace the jig in the slot without making any adjustments to set up the next cut.