



Draining groove jig



▲ The jig has three tapered packers fitted to get the correct fall and a datum line sets it correctly for a full-length slot



▲ You can fit a couple of stops for quicker setup

Unlike the established sinks made from stainless steel, resins or suchlike, a Belfast sink has no projection above or across the worktop so any water from dishes left to the side to dry have to have some way of draining the water back to the sink.

The usual way round this is to rout a run of grooves, and of course Trend has devised a jig for the purpose. Its immediate benefit is a uniform spacing between each groove. The jig can be easily set on the worktop so the resultant grooves will allow the water to run into the sink correctly.

Often overlooked, you see, is the need to get the water to drain once in the grooves; you can easily run a set of coving bit grooves into a top using a batten or straightedge as a guide, but unless they get deeper towards the sink the water simply lies in them.

Trend supplies a set of tapered packers to screw to the underside of the jig: two to the outer edges, and an all-important central one as the router can easily sag and deflect the jig without it, causing the final cuts to be irregular.

The jig has a sight line etched onto the top that you align with the edge of the sink opening.

This sets the correct distance along the top for a groove that tapers into the sink without getting too deep and wide at the sink edge while still retaining enough depth at the furthest point to pick up the water.

Additional holes at the etched end allow you to fit a pair of wooden setup blocks so that all you need to do is centralise the jig to the sink aperture. Additionally, a hole drilled in one corner is used to check that you have the

Kit & Tools

correct cutter to rout the grooves.

Trend recommends the first groove be about 100mm from the front edge of the worktop, and this sets the jig so that you can identify how many grooves you will be able to run into the sink. You can jiggle this slightly to get a better balance if you find the groove furthest in from the edge isn't in its best position.

You can run up to eight grooves in a row with the jig; more than enough in most circumstances, the only thing you need to remember is that not all of them will need routing in most installations. I find it best to set the jig in place and rout the groove that will lie furthest away from the edge first and then work back towards the front edge. This helps eliminate mistakes when you get in the swing of running the grooves and inadvertently rout a groove beyond the sink aperture.

To position the jig it needs to be secured firmly to the top with clamps, and you have to make sure you get the pressure beyond the tapered packers to ensure it stays flat and not bow up in the middle.

Cutter depth is important as the taper can be quite wide at the sink edge if it's set too deep; it's always best to run a test groove or set the router slightly shallow first and then adjust the cut with a fine adjuster to get the groove deep enough at the far end while not becoming too wide and deep at the sink end. Ideally the sink end should be around 4mm deep so as not to get too wide.

The jig has slots of 455mm long for general use, but you can also fit a batten to restrict the slot length to 300mm if you have a drainer that is closer to a wall or you don't want a big draining area.

Conclusion

Overall, the jig is again a simple enough bit of kit to set up, and as with the Belfast sink, helps eliminate mistakes while returning great results.

This one is also an 'out of the box' experience as it comes complete with a 30mm guidebush and the 3/8in shank 19mm cove cutter required for the job, so if you have a compatible router you're ready to go.



▲ The jig comes supplied with the correct cutter as well as a 30mm guide bush



▲ Set the depth by plunging the cutter and zeroing...



▲ ...then back off the plunge post to the correct cutting depth



▲ Starting at the innermost slot helps eliminate mistakes



▲ Make each pass through the jig until they are all routed



▲ Ideally a few test cuts will help eliminate the scorching shown here

Good The Woodworking Verdict

- + Automatically sets the fall; comes with cutter and guide bush
- Expensive; care needed to ensure you don't rout too far across worktop

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: £136.34

Fall: 0.5°

Groove pitch: 50.0mm

Groove length: 455mm

Slat width: 19.8 mm

Length: 625mm

Height: 585mm

Width: 12mm

Weight: 4.3kg



▲ The grooves are clean and consistent with a slight fall



▲ A bit of light sanding and it's ready for fitting and finishing