

Outdoor *Duckboards*

Meet the simple-to-build, multi-purpose outdoor “platforms” with dozens of great uses !

Duckboards...they shed water just like their namesake “feathered friends”...which makes them well-suited for duty as water-resistant *platforms* for storing hoses, patio furniture, garden walkways or a host of other outdoor applications. They’re rugged, amazingly easy to make and their good looks are here to stay.



Make these out of water-resistant woods such as cypress, Western red cedar, redwood, teak or pressure-treated patio woods. When used on the ground as walkways, *duckboards* require no base. If you find a need to excavate, use 3” to 4” of gravel for added drainage. If you’re planning to cluster a large number of *duckboards* together to create a small deck or patio, you may want to use concrete blocks or pavers to level them out above a bed of gravel.

Duckboard tables or benches can be made with wooden legs....or since they’re so heavy, with bases made of concrete blocks, stacked bricks, flue tiles or short lengths of telephone poles.

Make your *duckboards* by nailing and gluing the slats together with small wooden spacer blocks between them....use wooden dowels (like our example)...or space them using threaded stainless steel or brass rods and nuts. Just be sure the slats are adequately spaced. For the maximum comfort and practicality, you should have a maximum of 3/4” spacing between the boards. The most important step in constructing *duckboards* is the **measuring** step. It’s crucial to the eventual squareness of the finished piece.

The large wooden dowel shown in our example drawing is a 1-1/4” diameter *closet pole*. It comes in 10’ and 12’ lengths and is readily available at most lumber yards and home centers.

Start by cutting your slats to size. Be very careful to cut all slat pieces to the same exact length. Next, use your drill press set-up with your Rip Fence and an adjustable Flip-Up Stop to be sure all attachment holes are identically spaced. Set your depth-stop to drill through one side of your slat boards until the center spur of your bit just breaks the surface. Then, turn your slat board over and complete the hole from the other side. This approach prevents unsightly hole split-outs.

Next, crosscut your dowels (or threaded rods) to length. Make them slightly longer than needed to allow for inconsistencies. Start assembling your *duckboards* from the center slat outward toward each end. If you’re using wooden spacers, glue them into position using a water-resistant glue and small brads to hold them and keep them from rotating. We used glue and drove 6d finishing nails through the *duckboard* edges and into the wooden dowel to help hold the dowels.

If you’re joining your slats with threaded rods, use 1/2” diameter rods with two nuts and small washers at each location where the rod passes through a slat. This will provide the right amount of between-the-slats spacing and keep the nuts from sinking into the slat wood when the nuts are tightened.

Important note: If you're not making your *duckboards* from pressure-treated lumber or water-resistant woods, be sure to apply a waterproofing stain (and exterior-grade topcoat, if desired) to all slats BEFORE they're assembled.

