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DIY CHILD'S DESK



Of course children love to play. But they also love to work if the surroundings are right and our desk is sure to help. We've suggested a design with either a fairy tale or safari motif. However, you can also decorate it whatever way you - or your children - prefer.

The desk top rests on two leg panels and is fastened to them with aluminium brackets. The rear panel fastened to the back of the desk is a decorative effect that also reinforces the desk structure.

The following assembly instructions apply to 19-mm-thick medium-density fibreboard (MDF). You must adapt the list of materials accordingly if you opt for other materials or thicknesses.

Ask your DIY store or carpenter to cut the required boards to size.

1. Prepare and fit the connecting brackets



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The aluminium brackets used to connect the boards should be available off-the-peg in your DIY store. You can cut them to length using a jigsaw, circular saw or with a hand-held circular saw. To do this, adjust the speed or stroke rate to the lowest setting possible. You must always wear protective goggles when sawing to protect your eyes from flying metal pieces. After using the saw blade to cut aluminium, do not use it again to cut wood.

Using the drill and 4-mm universal drill bit, make the holes in the brackets. Countersink the holes on the inside of the brackets using the same countersink bit that you use for wood.

Now place one of the sides on the outer surface and position the bracket so it is flush with the upper edge. Mount the bracket in this position using the cordless screwdriver and screws (4 x 17 mm). Follow the same procedure for the other leg panels.

2. Join the leg panels and desk top together



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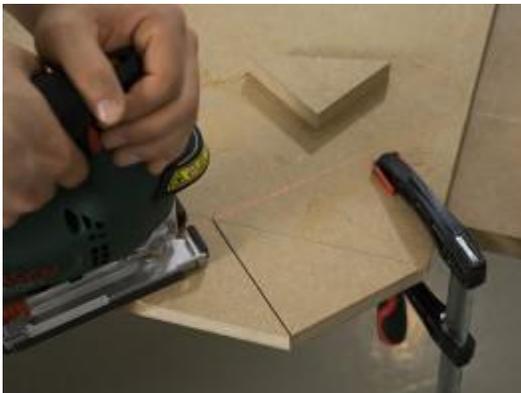
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Lay one of the leg panels with the attached bracket onto its front side on your work surface. Align the desk top with the relevant side panel on top of the leg panel. Using the cordless screwdriver and screws (4 x 17 mm), mount the leg panel. Once you have fastened the other leg panel, the desk is already complete without the rear panel, but not yet steady

3. Cut out and fit the rear panel





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Using a pencil, draw the chevrons at the upper edge of the rear panel. See our illustration for the measurements. Using the jigsaw, cut the pattern above the pencil line if possible. The more accurately you cut along the line, the less work you will have to do later with a wood file and sanding paper when straightening.

Now place the rear panel with its back face down on your work surface and align the rear edges of the desk on top. See our illustration for the exact position.

Using a pencil, trace the outline of the leg panels and the desk top on the rear panel. Remove the desk and predrill holes for fastening the screws in the centre of the outlines. Remember to countersink the holes on the back of the rear panel.

Place the desk with the front facing downwards on your trestles and align the rear panel on top. Using the cordless screwdriver and screws (4 x 40 mm), fit the rear panel to the desk.

Tip for screwing together two pieces of wood

In the piece where you want to insert the screws first, always predrill a hole that is 0.5 to 1 mm larger than the screw diameter; the hole should be countersunk for the screw head. In the piece that you are going to drill second, predrill a hole that is always 1 mm smaller than the screw diameter.

4. Prepare surfaces





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Take time to prepare the surfaces so they are in the best working condition possible before starting assembly.

First, fill in the screw holes in the MDF surfaces on display using putty or wood putty. Once the putty is dry (check the manufacturer's instructions), sand the area smooth using sanding paper with a grit of 120.

First chamfer all MDF edges with sanding paper with a grit of 120 at a 45° angle to create a small bevel. Use a sander and sanding paper (grit of 120 – 180) to work the MDF surfaces.

5. Surface treatment



First read the manufacturer's safety and handling instructions thoroughly. Make sure the room you are working in is well ventilated and not used for smoking, eating or drinking. Apply the priming filler with the roller or with a paint spraying system if necessary. Allow it to dry completely.



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You should change the paint tank if you want to apply another material with your fine spray system in the next step.

MDF tips

MDF surfaces are highly absorbent. For this reason, you may need to pay particular attention to the edges (i.e. apply several layers). You can skip the time-consuming task of sealing the absorbent surfaces by using MDF with a primer film. This MDF guarantees a perfect finish without fillers, at least on the surfaces.

Finely sand the primed surfaces and edges; increase the grit of the sanding paper from 120 to 180 to 240.

6. Paint the visible surfaces



A wide range of paints is available, of various types and price categories. The main criteria in choosing a paint should be its workability, the technical equipment you have at home, and the surface quality and durability you require. Ask for advice at a specialist retail outlet. If you are not an experienced painter, we recommend that you practice beforehand on a sample piece.

You will achieve the quickest and best result with acrylic paints. It is particularly quick and easy to apply these water-dilutable paints using a fine spray system.

Pour the paint into the paint tank and dilute it if necessary with water. Using a test board, adjust the spray jet at the nozzle and the paint flow at the setting wheel. The spray jet can be set to horizontal or vertical for surfaces and tapered for edges. Ideally, you should first paint the inner edges, then the outer edges and then finally the surfaces; working on these with even, parallel strokes.



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