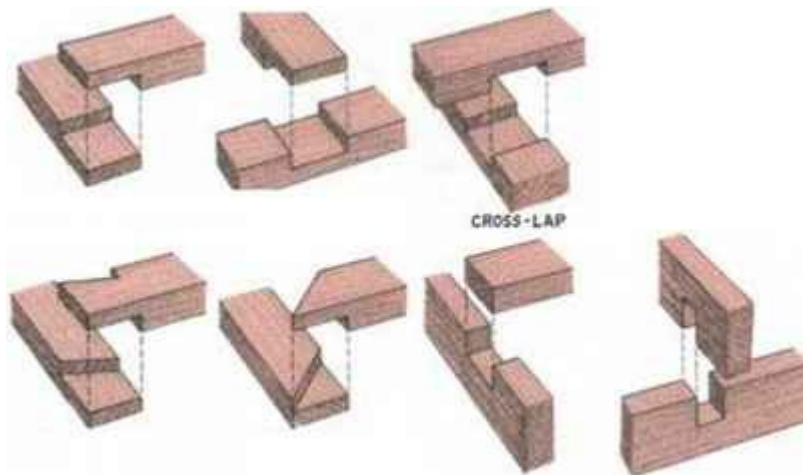


Routing Laps

Conceptually, cutting laps is a lot like [cutting rabbets](#) and dados. Don't reach for the rabbeting bit, though. Laps are usually much wider than cuts we typically think of as dados and rabbets. In some cases, a lot wider, and there in lies whatever nib there is.

Because of their similarity to dados and rabbets, the techniques for routing laps mimic those for cutting dados and rabbets. You use some variety of straight bit—straight, shear-cut, spiral, what have you. And you use a guide—a fence, a T-square, a straight template.

The depth of cut necessary makes the [plunge router](#) the first choice for this job. The correct depth setting—exactly half the thickness of the stock—can be elusive. To have to monkey around with intermediate depths compounds the frustration. And if you have to repeat the operation to lap both ends of each piece, it can send you over the top. Now if the total depth isn't more than 3/8 of an inch, you can probably do it in one pass; the first cut is unavoidably heavy, but as you work back and forth, widening the cut. You can nibble. But the plunge router is the real solution here. You can set the final depth right at the start, but use two or three intermediate settings before that ultimate depth.



true lap joints in many of its variations...

Routing End- and Cross-Laps

The usual technique for laying out end and cross laps is to use the work itself. Lay one work piece on top of the other, right where they are supposed to be lapped. Scribe along the edges of the top piece, marking the bottom piece. Turn the two over and repeat.

Now clamp a guide of some sort to the work, set up the router, and cut. If you are cutting several pieces of end laps as in four sides to a frame save time by aligning all the pieces, clamping them together, and cutting them all at once.

The rumble in the operation is router tipsiness. Usually, you make the first pass with the router riding the fence, to establish the shoulder of the lap. Then you make passes back and forth, working out to the end. For most of the operation, there's support for the router on both sides of the bit. But as you make that last pass, you're removing vital support. The router's going to tilt, and the bit's going to gouge the work. An oversized router base is the cure for this...

Notes:

Two T-squares, speed squares or a dado guide can be used to guide your router in cutting

cross or half laps...

Use a shoulder plane to super fine tune your lap joint...