

bit, countersink, and hand drill.

(1) *Cutting wood.* Saw wooden pieces according to the plans here. Cutting the grooves into the seat underside is either a cinch or tricky, depending on your equipment and skill.

I used a dado blade with a radial arm saw and a 45-degree jig to hold them in place. This also ensures that the grooves will automatically be 90-degrees to each other. This is important because they must line up with the crossed seat supports. You could use a router with a 1/2-inch flat cutter just as easily.

In a pinch, you could wield a handsaw guided by tacked-on waste strips to cut the edges of the two grooves, then chisel the waste out with a 1/2-inch-wide wood chisel. Sand the slots afterward, and round the edges. The fit is not critical. In fact, a bit loose is preferable here to avoid splintering the top edges of the supports.

(2) *Preparing seat corners.* Cut one inch off all seat corners. Sand edges smooth. In two opposite corners, drill a 5/16-inch hole through from the top. Widen the top opening of each hole halfway through.

Now cut a 5/16-inch-wide slot from the outer edge to the hole in both corners. (One hole can be left slotless, to tie the stool cord permanently to the seat. This is helpful with younger boys who tend to lose things easily.)

(3) *Assemble stool.* Each stool requires two supports, one with a center slot running from the base toward the top, one with a center slot running from the top toward the base. Fit these together, then position the seat grooves on the narrower upper support ends.

(4) *Connect cord.* Cut a 32-inch length of 5/16-inch shock cord for each stool. Knot one end and pass the other from the top through one hole. Tie a second knot in the other end and stretch the cord under the supports and up into the other slotted corner hole.

(5) *Sanding and finishing.* After test-fitting all pieces, take apart and sand all surfaces to the smoothness you like. Finish off the project with several coats of a clear varnish. (I used Polyvarathane.) After the varnish has dried, apply a coat of hard, paste wax. This will help when taking the stool apart.

In damp conditions plywood may absorb moisture, even when sealed

After you make one or more camp stools, be sure to keep track of where you put the instructions; at camporees and other events people who see the stools are certain to ask, 'How do you make them?'

with varnish, making it difficult to release the notched supports. Just rest one side of one support on a rigid object, like a rock or log, and press firmly on the other support to unlock them. Air dry the supports before reassembly. If the fit is too tight, sand the slots a little. Refinish with varnish.

Your camp stools should last many years. (some of mine are still in use after 10 years of hard service.) You may find it helps to re-varnish the bottoms of the supports periodically. Also, if the shock cord stretches over time, cut off an inch or so and tie a new knot.

At camporees and other events, people will see the stools and ask, "How do you make 'em?" Now you (and they) know. ■

In more than 20 years in Scouting, Robert E. (Scoutmaster Bob) Wilson has served as Cubmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, Scoutmaster (for eight years), and troop committee chairman for LDS units in Eugene, Ore. He has four Eagle Scout sons.