

Woodworking Workbenches with Vices

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Workshop Furniture & Storage

A woodworking workbench is a heavy, stable bench with a front and tail vice, dog holes and a tool well, designed to hold work firmly for planing, sawing and chiselling. It is the heart of any woodwork shop and the first piece of furniture any woodworker builds.

Key Features

- Solid hardwood or beech tops 60-80 mm thick
- Front vice and tail vice with quick release
- Dog holes for bench dogs and holdfasts
- Tool well or tray along the back
- Apron and leg construction for rigidity

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Hold work for planing, sawing and chiselling
- Clamp panels with bench dogs and holdfasts
- Support long boards in the tail vice
- Provide a stable base for hand tool work

Safe Operation

1. Set the vice to grip work lightly for planing
2. Use holdfasts and dogs for panels that cannot be clamped
3. Keep the top clean and dry between jobs
4. Protect the top with scrap wood under sharp tools
5. Re-tighten vices if parts slip

SAFETY NOTES

- Check the vice quick-release is locked before cutting
- Keep tools in the tool well, never on the bench edge
- Do not stand on the workbench
- Wipe spills immediately to avoid slips
- Check workbench stability before heavy planing

Maintenance & Consumables

- Rub the top with wax or oil to repel glue
- Tighten vice screws and replace worn handles
- Brush sawdust off the vice threads
- Re-glue or bolt legs if the bench racks
- Keep the tool well cleared at the end of the day

Specification & Buying Notes

Invest in a heavy bench with good vices - it is a lifetime purchase. A 1.5-1.8 m bench with front and tail vice suits classrooms. Benchtop models work for small spaces but rattle under heavy planing.