Thickness Planers

DT Workshop Equipment Reference — D&T / STEM resource for school workshops | Woodworking Machines

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A thickness planer machines the top face of timber to a set thickness after a surface planer has flattened the face and edge. It feeds boards through between the cutter block and pressure rollers, producing parallel, consistent thickness for furniture components.

Key Features

- Planing widths from 250 to 400 mm typical
- Depth of cut up to 3-4 mm per pass
- Feed speeds around 5-8 m per minute
- Anti-kickback fingers and dust hood
- Dual roller feed with adjustable pressure

Typical Uses in the Workshop

- Bring rough timber to exact finished thickness
- Machine multiple components to the same size
- Remove saw marks after resawing
- Prepare stock for edge-gluing panels

Safe Operation

1. Take the workpiece to the thickness needed in steps
2. Feed the work flat, end first, between the rollers
3. Do not plane pieces shorter than the table gap
4. Remove twist or cup by surface planing first
5. Empty the dust bag before it fills

SAFETY NOTES

- Never reach into the machine while running
- Do not plane pieces shorter than 300 mm without push blocks
- Watch for knots that can kick or split
- Wear hearing and eye protection
- Keep the outfeed clear so boards do not jam

Maintenance & Consumables

- Change or rotate knives when finish degrades
- Check chip breaker and pressure rollers for wear
- Vacuum dust from the mechanism and motor vents
- Check belt tension and tracking
- Wax the table and rollers occasionally

Specification & Buying Notes

School models benefit from variable feed speed and a good dust extraction port. Buy spare knives and a setting gauge. A thicknesser alone cannot fix twisted boards - pair it with a surface planer for real accuracy.