How to Make Cover Strips
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This easy guide shows how to make cover strips from pine or hardwood timber. This method cuts down on the cost of cover strips especially if you have leftover timber from construction, but even buying a length of 2 x 4 and cutting it down is cheaper than buying strips new.

Some old houses will use cover strips to hide the gaps between sheets instead of plaster. Instead of ripping everything out and replacing with plasterboard, it can be more economical to replace any rotting or split strips and repair the sheets with putty.

This is also preferable if you don't like plastering like myself! Cover strips can be costly to purchase, but you can save money by making them yourself. It does take a few hours of extra work, but if you're on a budget it is worthwhile.

Tools and Materials Needed

Circular Saw with Guide
Leather Gloves, Ear Plugs and Protective Glasses
Belt Sander
120 (Fine) Grit Sandpaper for Sander
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2 Clamps
2 x 4 (38 mm x 89 mm) or 2 x 6 (38 mm x 140 mm) Timber at required length

Method to Cut a Cover Strip

Always use protective gloves, ear plugs and protective glasses.

First clamp the timber to the side of your workbench at the middle and one end. Place a piece of timber or rubber between the clamp and the wood to avoid marking the wood.

Make sure the timber overhangs the edge of the bench by at least the amount that will be cut.

Next attach the guide to your saw and measure 8 mm or the required thickness from the edge of the blade to the guide and tighten.

Set the saw on the edge of the timber then lower the blade so it will cut to the required depth. With the guide firm against the edge of the timber cut along the edge until you get to the first clamp. Stop the saw being careful not to move it while the blade is turning.
Remove the clamps then reposition them to where you have already cut with one sideways to hold the cut strip. Start the saw again holding it firmly then continue cutting through to the end.

Continue cutting off strips repositioning the timber so it overhangs the bench. At the end you will need to clamp the timber to the side of the bench to be able to use up the whole stick.

Make sure the timber is firmly clamped at all times and be careful not to cut into your bench.

Method to Finish a Cover Strip

Clamp the strip to the top of the bench then use a belt sander with fine grit sandpaper to sand the surface of the cover strip.

Next clamp the strip to the side of the bench then sand down the side with the belt sander. Turnover, clamp then sand the other side.

Go over with sand paper to remove any splinters.

Only one side of the strip needs to be sanded as the other side won’t be seen.

All done! Cut to size and you’re ready to nail on.

Tip

If your circular sander starts to smoke and makes black marks on the wood it means you need to change the blade.

For a unique finish cut the strips thicker then use a router to make a decorative edge on either side of the strip.