

Favorite Table Saw Push Stick

By: **Steve Shanesy** | April 26, 2012

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The push stick you use with your table saw is an integral part of the safety system that helps keep you out of harm's way. As such, don't take the lowly push stick for granted. There are numerous push stick styles and designs, some shop-made and others store-bought, but in my view, not all push sticks offer the same level of safety.

Pictured is the style push stick I've relied on for years. It's made from 3/4" hardwood plywood and is about a 12" long and 6" wide (from the bottom to top of the handle). I keep a 3/8" heel near the back on the

bottom to hook the wood that's being pushed along. I don't apply any sort of finish so it grips well. I route a 1/4" round-over everywhere except the bottom where it contacts the wood when in use. The grip or handle is angled forward slightly so my wrist is in a comfortable position. Those are the comfort/ergonomic reasons I like this style.

But more important are the features that I believe are vital to keeping me safe when I'm pushing narrow stock through the saw. We all know kickback is a real hazard that can often lead to serious injury. This push stick helps prevent kickback. It does this by applying downward pressure on the stock.

As you know, when a kickback occurs, the stock binds then rises up over the saw blade teeth on the outfeed side of the table. The rim speed of the blade hurls the stock at you. In the worst of cases, your hand is dragged into the blade. So to the degree you can keep the stock down flat on the table, you can help prevent kickback.

The other safety element is the handle position that keeps your hand elevated above the blade – assuming you follow the rule to set the blade height no more than a 1/4" or so above the stock. And the angle of the handle assures you are applying downward pressure as well as pushing pressure. I also make it a habit to slightly angle the push stick toward the table saw fence. This keeps the stock tight against the fence, another important part of kickback prevention.



(Note: After posting, there were several requests for a full-size drawing. You can download one now by clicking the link. You may need to fuss with your printer settings to so it doesn't scale the drawing to fit within the default margins, but if you don't do that, the reduction is very slight. [Push Stick Drawing](#))

– *Steve Shanesy*