

## Band Saw Blade Tension Lever

Setting the tension on my band saw blade was time-consuming. I needed a way to release the tension and then quickly return the tension to the proper setting the next time I used the saw. One day, it struck me that I could make a simple lever to quickly release the tension (see photo at right).

First, I replaced the band saw's original "knuckle-busting" tension rod with one long enough to clear the saw's housing. That will make fine-tuning the tension easier.

For the lever to clear the tension gauge, I built a riser and slid it down the rod. The riser sits on the guides on either side of the gauge.

To make the lever, I used a 2' piece of hardwood and tapered it to fit my hand better. I rounded the front and bottom corners to make the lever easier to raise and lower.

Next, I attached a spacer block to the lever. This block will hold the lever in the "up" position to maintain the proper blade tension when I'm using my band saw. But you'll need to attach the block to the lever at this point so the hole for the rod is drilled at the correct



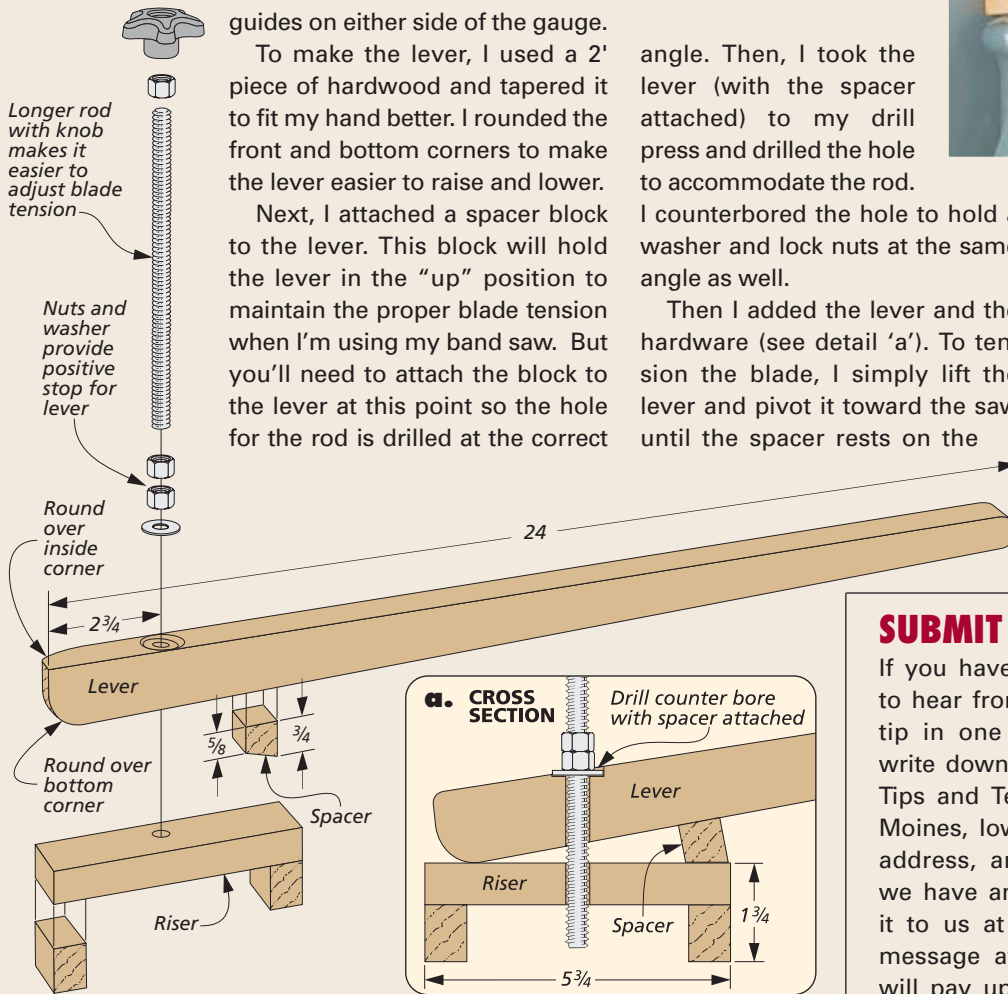
angle. Then, I took the lever (with the spacer attached) to my drill press and drilled the hole to accommodate the rod.

I counterbored the hole to hold a washer and lock nuts at the same angle as well.

Then I added the lever and the hardware (see detail 'a'). To tension the blade, I simply lift the lever and pivot it toward the saw until the spacer rests on the

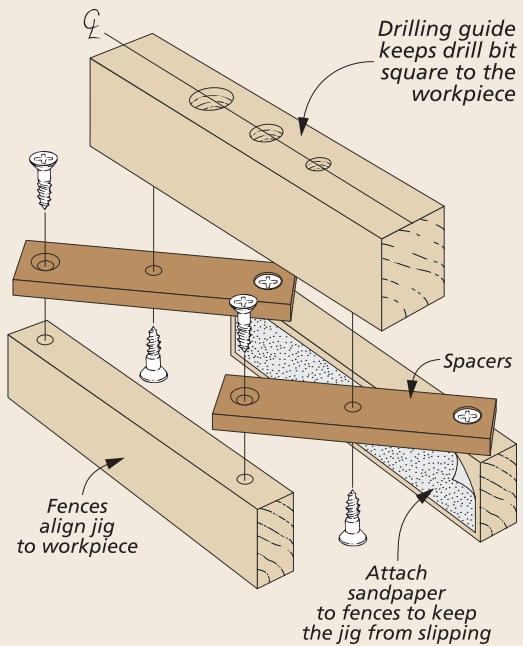
riser. To release the tension, all I have to do is just lift and pivot the lever away from the saw. You can still fine-tune the tension if you need to by adjusting the longer tension rod and knob.

Bill Esposito  
Rindge, New Hampshire



## SUBMIT YOUR TIPS

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## Doweling Jig

Drilling centered, consistent holes is crucial for dowel joints. While you can purchase a doweling jig, I made my own (photo at right).

The drilling guide is just a piece of hardwood with a few centered holes that match common dowel sizes. A pair of  $\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick fences are attached to a pair of pivoting spacers.

To use the jig, slip it over the end or edge of a workpiece. Then pivot the spacers until the fences are flat against the workpiece. A few strips of self-adhesive sandpaper keeps the jig from slipping.

Jared Huber  
Appleton, Wisconsin



## Quick Tips

### DUCT TAPE SANDPAPER BACKER

It's easy for the sandpaper on my sanding block to get snagged and torn on a workpiece. Besides being a pain, it's a waste of materials. But I've come up with a simple way to make it last a little longer. I apply a layer of duct tape to the back for added reinforcement.

Bill Reiman  
Brooklyn, New York

### SHARPENING SURFACE

I sharpen my tools with sandpaper. But to get the best results, I need a flat surface. So I bought a granite reference plate used by machinists. It's inexpensive and heavy so it won't get pushed around from the sharpening action.

Charles Jarman  
El Cajon, California

### PLAYING CARD PROTECTORS

To keep the workpiece from being marred by the collar of the countersink bit when drilling holes, I punch holes in a playing card with a paper punch. Then when you drill a hole in which the drill collar comes in contact with the workpiece, slip the playing card over the hole and the playing card protects the workpiece.

Len Urban  
Rancho Mirage, California

## Pipe Clamp Pads



Pipe clamps are a great way to assemble a project. The problem is the jaws can damage the wood. So I came up with a simple solution — wood pads that fit over the jaws of my pipe clamps and protect the project (see photo).

The wood pads slide over the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " pipe, remain in place at all times, and can serve as clamp stands when needed.

The  $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick pads start out as  $2" \times 3\frac{1}{4}"$  blocks. To allow the pipe to pass through the block, I drilled a  $1\frac{1}{8}"$ -dia. hole at one end.

After rounding off the sharp edges at the hole end, all that's left is to slide the pads in place and you're ready to go to work.

Vince Franzik  
Chesapeake, Virginia

