

Rip saw

Background

There is a rip saw in most woodworking and furniture workshops. It is used for ripping and edging of often unprocessed timber, parallel to the grain. Ripping is an important process – maximising timber yield and minimising waste can save lot of money. A skilled operator can remove many defects during the ripping process, significantly improving the quality of the product.

You can rip timber with various kinds of saw, for example a bandsaw. This section describes a hand fed rip saw. To cut large quantities you can use a feed system of some kind.

Machine structure

The rip saw consists of a table with a powerful saw unit fitted underneath.

Blade

The blade is covered by an upper blade guard above the table, and a lower blade guard underneath the table.

The blade in the rip saw usually has fewer teeth and larger spaces between them than a panel saw blade. That means little effort is required to feed the timber, and the cut is coarser.

A rip blade usually has hard metal teeth brazed onto the tool body, and is easily damaged by knocks and bumps against another metal. Always place the blade on wood or cardboard to avoid damaging the fragile teeth.

Riving knife

The riving knife behind the blade prevents the timber closing onto the blade.

Fence

There is a fence parallel to the blade. The fence can be adjusted laterally and is used to set the required rip width. The fence may be fitted with a low fence or be designed to be lowered, which is useful when handling thin timber. It means the overhead guard can be fully lowered without hitting the fence.

Sliding table

The part of the machine table to the left of the blade is called the sliding table, and it allows you to move the timber past the blade for edging. The sliding table ensure that the edge is straight. A wedge secures end of the timber so it is easier for you to hold the timber steady on the sliding table.

Push stick

The rip saw must always have a push stick to move the timber past the blade, so your hands go nowhere near the blade.