

BUILD YOUR OWN SEESAW

No matter where we have worked in the world, people young and old love to seesaw. Given that seesaws require a close connection with another person, feel perfectly risky, and, like a swing, give a brief sensation of ‘flight,’ it’s not hard to understand why they are beloved. Despite the joy they bring, seesaws are often falsely vilified as being too risky and have been removed from most playgrounds across the United States. Most children today have never seen a seesaw or even heard of the wood ‘seesaw,’ but they know exactly what to do with one when placed in front of them and our community-built seesaws quickly become magnets of adventure in any project. Senior citizens, on the other hand, will immediately identify our seesaws, want to use them and begin to wax nostalgic about play.

Fairly simple to build with tasks appropriate for all ages, seesaws are affordable, durable, easily movable, and irresistible to all ages. They are a great way to quickly bring and inspire more community-generated play on your street as well as in your park, school and backyard.

TIME 2 HOURS

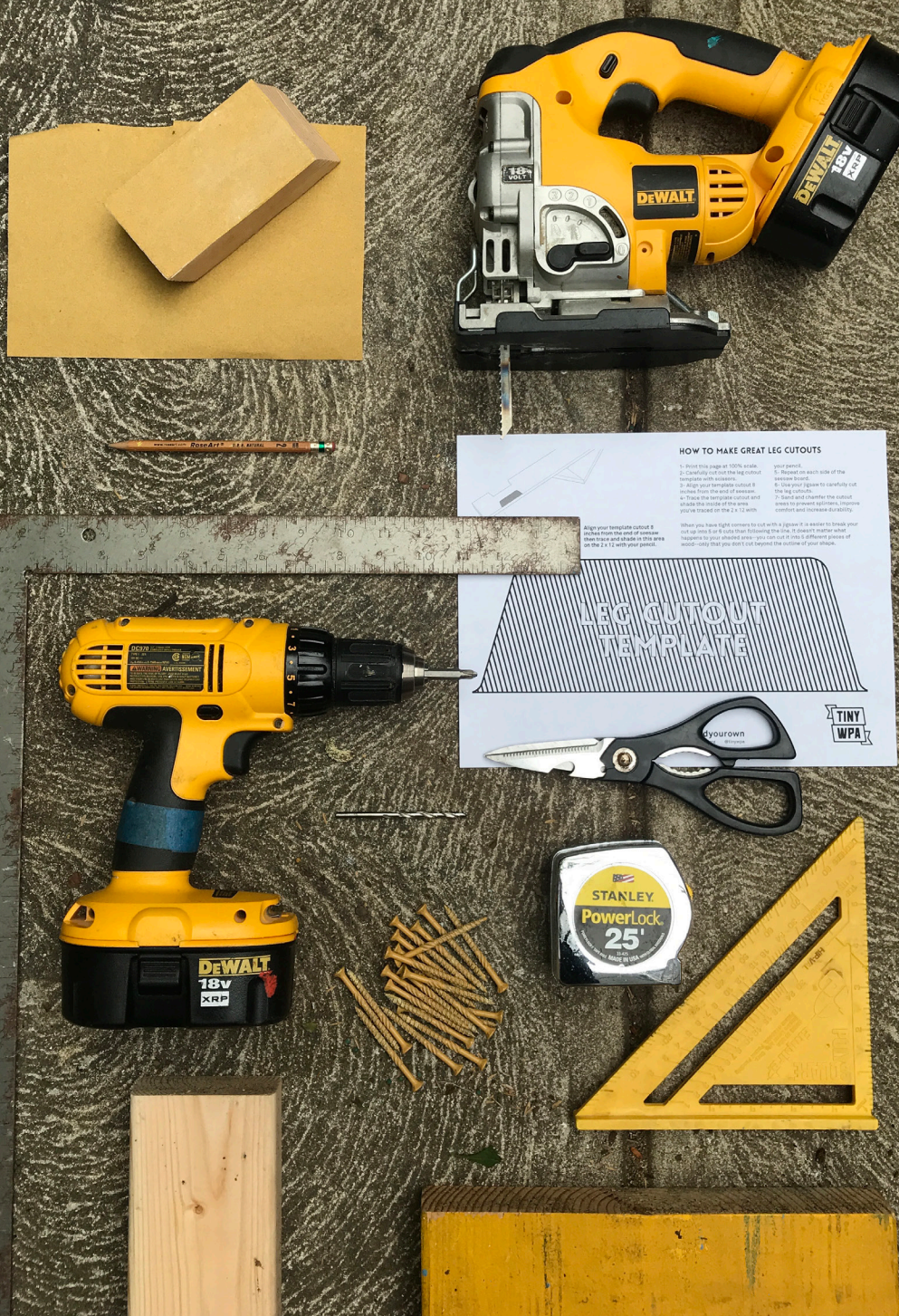
COST \$25-45



Whether trying to seesaw with a NFL football player like Connor Barwin or balancing on top, our seesaw encourages healthy risk-taking. Although quite stable, by lacking a permanent anchor to the ground it feels a little wobbly and this naturally discourages most inappropriate uses.



WHAT DO YOU NEED?



MATERIALS

- 1 2"x4"x8' common pine or doug fir
- 1 2"x12"x12' common pine or doug fir
- 1 lb 2.5" exterior wood screws (about 24 screws are needed)
- 3 sheets 100-150 grit sandpaper
- 1 qt semi-gloss exterior paint w primer
- 1 wood glue

TOOLS

- 1 chop saw or circular saw
- 1 jigsaw
- 1 drill with a driver bit and 1/8" drill bit
- 1 tape measurer
- 1 speed square
- 1 framing square
- 1 drop cloth
- 1 paint brush or roller
- 1 paint tray
- 1 orbital sander or sanding block

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Here are a couple of tips and things that you should consider before you head to the hardware store to purchase materials.

Getting Your 2 x 12 Rough Cut At Your Hardware Store

Most 2 x 12's come in lengths that are very hard to transport. Many hardware stores will cut wood for you, but the accuracy of their measurements and cut quality should not be trusted. We recommend adding at least 3" to the measurement of anything you are having them cut and then make all final cuts on your own.

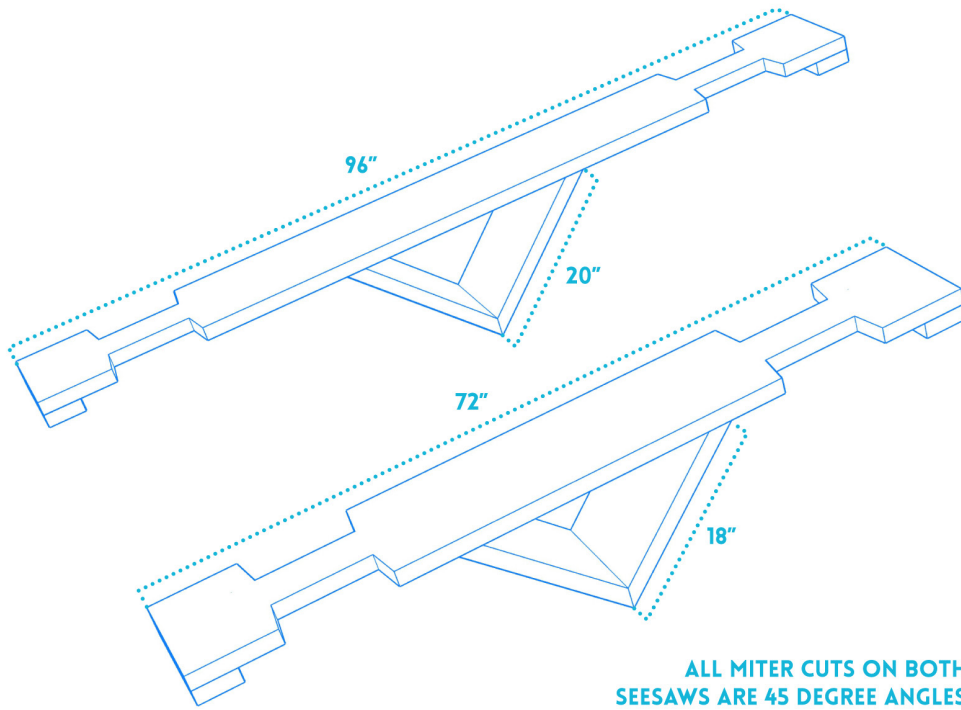
Size Of Your Seesaw

We have included recommended dimensions for two different seesaws: a 6' seesaw that is perfect for most backyards and an 8' seesaw that is great for public spaces and the current need for physical distancing. The 8' seesaw is great for ALL AGES, while the 6' seesaw is a little more geared for children.

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HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT!



TIPS!

This Is At Least A Two Person Job

Just as seesawing requires two people, building one is a lot easier with two people, particularly during assembly.

Jigsawing!

Follow the tips on the attached template. This is a task that we have seen many 10 year olds do--with supervision--better than adults. Regardless of age, we recommend practice cutting the required shape on scrap wood until you can get a perfect cut.

Pre-Drill All Of Your Screw Holes

Because the base pieces of 2 x 12 have 45 degree miter cuts, when

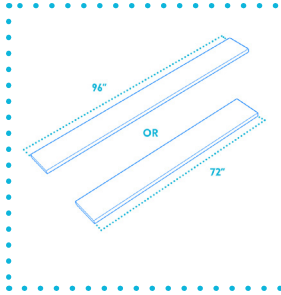
screwing together they will want to 'move.' Pre-drilling and having an extra set of hands to hold everything together will help minimize this challenge.

Learn How To Toenail!

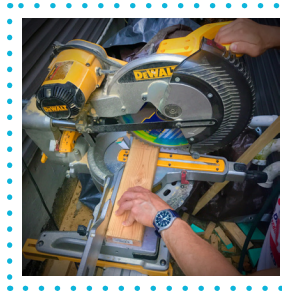
Toenailing your screws is required to assemble your triangular base. There are videos on YouTube that will teach you how to do this 'pro technique'.

Gaps Between Boards Are Bad!

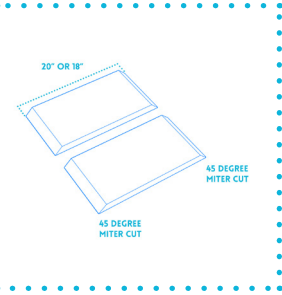
A gap of any size between any two boards on your seesaw means that connection is 50% weaker than if they were touching. If a gap exists, you will need remove ALL of the screws and then screw it back together.



Cut your seat board to length, either 6' or 8'



Cut two 2 x 4 seat reinforcers to 11.25" long



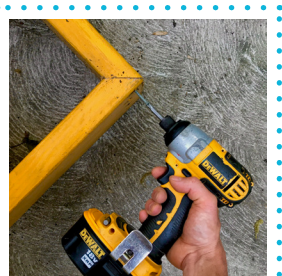
Miter cut two pieces for your triangle base at 45°



Use template to trace and shade cut-out areas



Carefully jigsaw leg cut-outs, sand all edges



Use 3 screws per side to join two base pieces



Use the framing square to align the triangle base with the middle of the length of the seatboard



Have friend hold base in place, pre-drill and toenail 4 screws into each side of the seatboard



Pre-drill 2 x 4 seat reinforcers, glue, align and screw to seatboard. Sand and paint everything!

Share and inspire others by posting photos of what you build online. Tag @tinywpa and use this hashtag!

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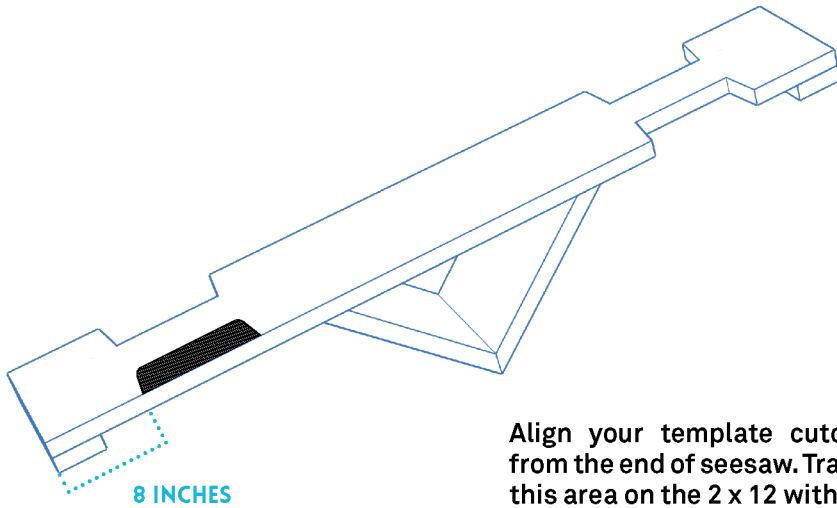


HOW TO MAKE GREAT LEG CUTOUTS

- 1- Print this page.
- 2- Carefully cut out the leg cutout template with scissors.
- 3- Align your template cutout 8 inches from the end of seesaw.
- 4- Trace the template cutout and shade the inside of the area you've traced on the 2 x 12.

- 5- Repeat on each side of the seesaw board.
- 6- Use your jigsaw to carefully cut the leg cutouts.
- 7- Sand and chamfer the cutout areas to prevent splinters, improve comfort and increase durability.

When you have tight corners to cut with a jigsaw it is easier to break your cut up into 5 or 6 cuts than following the line. It doesn't matter what happens to your shaded area--you can cut it into 5 different pieces of wood--only that you don't cut beyond the outline of your shape.



Align your template cutout 8 inches from the end of seesaw. Trace and shade this area on the 2 x 12 with your pencil.

LEG CUTOUT
TEMPLATE