

BLOCK POLE

This simple and easily made toy is a standard favourite that helps to develop hand-eye coordination, as well as a concept of size and number, and it's also fun to play with. Not much wood is needed and most of the pieces are small, so you may well be able to use up some scrap wood, instead of throwing it on the fire.

SKILL LEVEL 1

Materials

- 1 x 300 mm x 220 mm x 22 mm (12 in x 8 7/8 in x 7/8 in) piece pine
- 1 x 155 mm x 10 mm (6 1/8 in x 3/8 in) dowel rod
- Sandpaper
- Wood glue
- Varnish or wood finish

1. Before cutting out the components, draw them all on the board, ensuring that all corners are square, and that you will have enough wood.

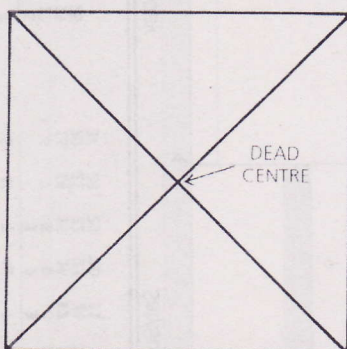
Blocks and base

2. Draw and then cut out one block of each of the following sizes:

- 120 mm x 120 mm (4 3/4 in x 4 3/4 in) (to be used for the base)
- 100 mm x 100 mm (4 in x 4 in)
- 90 mm x 90 mm (3 1/2 in x 3 1/2 in)
- 80 mm x 80 mm (3 1/4 in x 3 1/4 in)
- 70 mm x 70 mm (2 3/4 in x 2 3/4 in)
- 60 mm x 60 mm (2 1/2 in x 2 1/2 in)
- 50 mm x 50 mm (2 in x 2 in)

3. On each piece, draw in the diagonals on one surface (diagram 1). This will give you the centre point into which to drill the hole.

DIAGRAM 1



blocks. Using fine sandpaper, sand all the components smooth and clean, ensuring that you remove all pencil marks.

Pin

7. For the pin, round off one end of the dowel rod with a rasp and sandpaper.

Construction

8. Smear a small quantity of wood glue on the square end of the dowel rod and, using a mallet, tap the dowel rod into the hole in the base piece. Using a square, check that the dowel rod is square to the base, from all directions. Wipe away any excess glue with a damp cloth. If this is not removed promptly it will prevent the varnish from penetrating the wood at the points where the glue has dried, and the finished appearance of the toy will be spoiled.

Finishing

9. This toy looks great finished with varnish or a good wood finish, so apply three coats to every component except the dowel rod. Remember that when each coat is dry it must be sanded down with fine sandpaper before the next coat is applied. When all the components are thoroughly dry, the toy can be assembled.

