Horse play

Build our wooden rocking horse to win a young heart

Most children would dearly love to own a horse. While the real thing is usually impractical, this wooden horse may just fit the bill. It's easy to make with just a few power tools and is sturdy enough for any rough rider. Jim Cassidy, winning jockey in the 1997 Caulfield and Melbourne Cup double, thinks this project will be a winner with the kids. *By Dieter Mylius*

Here's how

1 Transfer component shapes from the diagram to a sheet of plywood marked in 100mm squares to make template (A). Cut out with a jigsaw. A template helps to keep the pairs of rockers and legs identical.

2 Trace shape of head (B) on the pine. The joint with the leg is set at 22.5° (half a 45° angle) to the leg. Cut out with a jigsaw, except the head to leg joint which, for accuracy, is best cut with a circular or handsaw. Drill a 19mm hole for handle. Similarly cut rockers (C) and seat (D).

3 Mark out legs (E) with housing edges which sit on rockers angled at 85° to give legs a slight splay. Distance from housing to housing is 270mm. Set sliding bevel to 85°. Cut out legs with a jigsaw, except top of housing. Cut this angle with a handsaw. Sand all surfaces rounding edges.

4 Measure a 480mm span on two central flat surfaces of rockers so spacing is equal. At these points mark an 85° line splaying to front and back using bevel. Pre-drill two screw holes adjacent to each line and one angled in from bottom of each leg. Screw legs to rockers.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Item	Part	Size	Material
A	Template	1000 x 800 x 3mm	Plywood
B	Head	240 x 45 x 500mm	Pine
C	Rockers (2)	140 x 45 x 1000mm	Pine
D	Seat	190 x 19 x 460mm	Pine
E	Legs (2)	290 x 30 x 450mm	Pine
F	Seat supports (2)	90 x 35 x 365mm	Pine
G	Cup bolt, washer & nut	8mm dia x 140mm	Steel
H	Back of neck	45mm-thick offcut	Pine
I	Tail	45mm-thick offcut	Pine
J	Crossbar	90 x 35 x 270mm	Pine
K	Crosspieces (2)	70 x 19 x 360mm	Pine
L	Handle	19mm dia x 250mm	Dowelling
M	Mane	250mm	Cushion fringing
N	Gold nails (15–20)	12mm round head	Upholstery nails

Precut components on the template, and check the other parts against actual unit as it is being built. All joints are glued and screwed unless otherwise indicated. Counter-bore for all screw heads and, when finished, plug with timber or filler.

5 The inside distance between tops of legs should be close to 350mm. Splay ends of seat supports (F) at 85° to match slope of the legs. At top of each leg, measure 10mm in from side and square a line down inside of leg. Screw the seat supports along this line.

6 To position head, find centre of top of front leg. On meeting face of the head mark 175mm from bottom and again find the centre. Align the two marks and screw head in place from back of leg. Drill 8mm

hole at an upward angle starting at chest cavity. To get through both pieces of wood, drill as far as you can through head to mark the leg, remove head to drill through back of the leg. Replace head, slip in the bolt (G). Fix with a washer and nut.
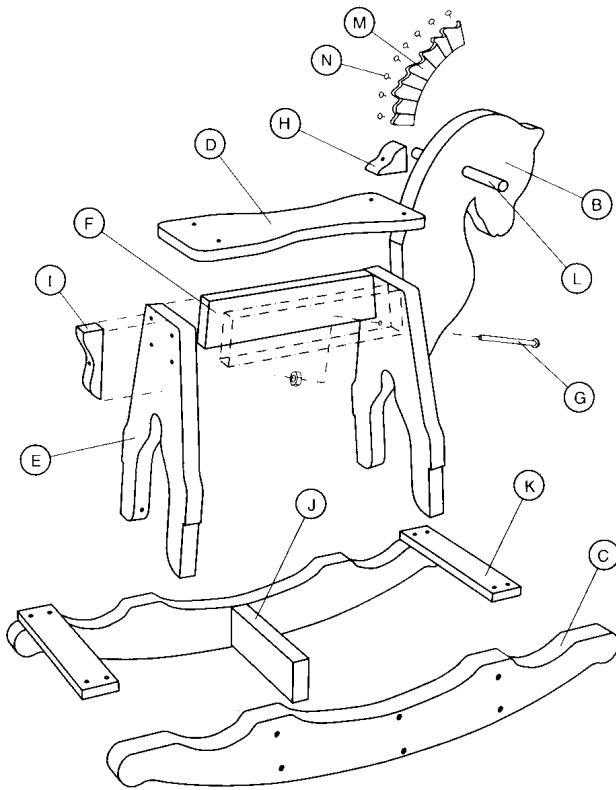
7 Screw on seat (D) then add back of the neck (H) and the tail (I).

8 Add crossbar (J) by screwing from the sides, then fix the crosspieces (K) to flat sections of rocker ends. Hold handle (L)

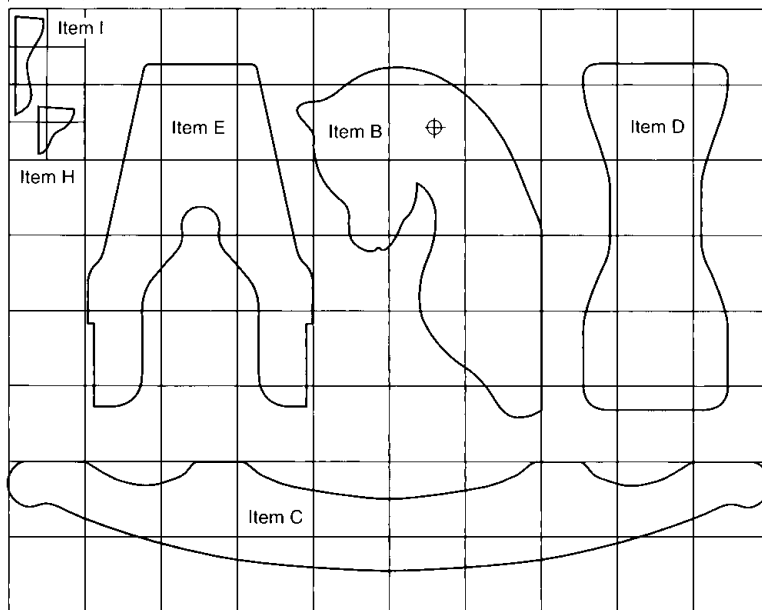in place with a little glue and pins skew-nailed into the head using a nail punch.

9 After a final sand, draw head features on horse using a black indelible marker before giving it a couple of coats of polyurethane. As a finishing touch add a mane (M) made of a small length of cushion fringing held in place with decorative gold upholstery nails (N).

diagrams Tech View Studio

M
N
H
D
B
F
L
I
G
E
J
K
C

1 square = 50 x 50mm

Item A

Item I

Item H

Item E

Item B ⊕

Item D

Item C

1 square = 100 x 100mm