



DIY: Make Your Own Porta Timber Bedhead

with DIY specialist, Natasha Dickens from Little Red Industries



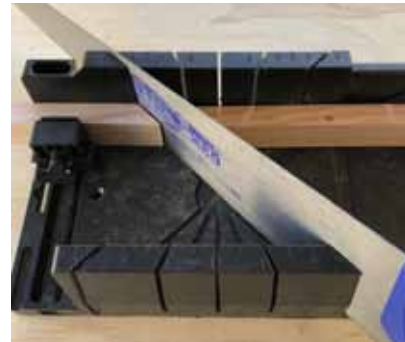
“To build this mid-century style bedhead, I used Porta Ribbed Edging which is so easy to work with and doesn’t need much sanding,” says DIY specialist, Natasha Dickins, Little Red Industries.

Like any great piece of furniture, this bedhead combines aesthetics with function. “I’ve designed this timber bedhead to tuck into a small room, but it can be easily made to suit any space. Using Tasmanian Oak timber keeps it light and gives a lovely finish and the little shelves make it useful,” says Natasha. “This is a weekend project and it helps if you have access to basic power tools and have a solid surface. But if you can’t use a full workshop, read on for my tips on alternative techniques.”

“This project is designed for a Queen-size bed and to sit on the edge of an existing platform bed. Measure up your bedroom space and adjust the height of the bedhead and legs to suit the style and dimensions of your bed, keeping it as low as possible to keep the weight down. The shelves make it front-heavy, so attach it to the wall if you can,” says Natasha.

Natasha used Bondcrete adhesive to glue the timber and finished with Moncel Stain & Varnish. “Bondcrete is great for assembly as it dries fast but gives you time to line things up, and Monocel Stain & Varnish in Clear Satin is a lovely finish that protects while enhancing the grain of the timber.”

What you’ll need:



Materials

- Bondcrete adhesive for assembly.
- Painter’s tape for labelling.
- 40mm timber screws to attach the legs and shelves.
- Timber filler in a colour to match Tasmanian Oak.
- Monocel Satin & Varnish in Clear to finish.

Items are available at your local timber and hardware supplier.

Cutting List

- 25mm plywood cut to 2350 x 600mm for the backing board.
- 2 x 25mm plywood cut to 300 x 250mm for the shelves.
- 4 x 2.4m lengths of 30 x 18mm Porta DAR in Tasmanian Oak (DAR3018TOSL) for the framing.
- 17 x 2.4m lengths of 35 x 8mm Porta Ribbed Edging in Tasmanian Oak (RE3508TOSL) for the cladding, trimmed to 2350mm long.
- 2 x 2.4m of 64mm pine for the legs and packers.

Tools

- Combination square to mark up angles.
- Dropsaw or handsaw with mitre box.
- Clamps, the longer the better!
- 120 and 240-grit abrasive paper with a sanding block.
- Nail gun with air compressor and small brads, or 25mm nails and hammer.
- Drill with drill bits.
- Mini roller with microfibre cover and a tray.

How to make it:

Step 1 - Set out the backing board

Position the 25mm backing board on a solid surface, with one end pushed against a straight edge, such as clamped offcut or a wall, making sure it’s high enough to keep the cladding straight.

NATASHA’S TIP: A standard 25mm x 2400 x 1200mm Plywood sheet is heavy, so have it cut lengthways at the hardware store or timber yard with one end trimmed to make it 2350mm.

Step 2 - Frame the shelves

To make the frames, cut one end of the framing at 45° using a dropsaw or handsaw with mitre box, then measure it against the front of the plywood from the inside angle, marking the other inside corner with a combination square and cutting. Then cut each side, measuring from inside the angle against the plywood.

NATASHA’S TIP: Always cut the long side first, just in case you make a mistake and have to cut it down for the short sides.



Step 3 - Finish the shelves

Position the frame to ensure the mitres are a tight fit. Apply Bondall adhesive around the edges and clamp to dry. Sand using 120-grit abrasive paper to round over the corners and along the edges. Then smooth all over with 240-grit.

NATASHA'S TIP: The sharp edge where two sides meet is called an arris and removing it gives a hand-crafted finish while preventing splinters. Practice on offcuts to work out your style and keep it consistent for the bedhead frame.



Step 4 - Attach the cladding

Starting from the base, adhere the cladding with Bondcrete, pushing the strips together to minimise gaps. At the seventh strip, mark with tape and position it without adhesive, then continue with the rest. Nail every 600mm (don't nail the seventh strip).

NATASHA'S TIP: Before you start, make sure the strips are 2350mm long, the same length as the backing. Don't apply glue to the seventh strip as you'll need to remove it for the shelves.



Step 5 - Set out the shelves

Working on the seventh strip, mark the width of the shelves then use a handsaw to cut down and along the bottom ridge. Check the shelf fits, apply Bondcrete and tap the strip down, nailing to secure.

NATASHA'S TIP: The ridge of the strip runs under the shelf for a neat fit. I used a Japanese handsaw for this but you can use a regular handsaw too. If the shelf doesn't quite fit, use 180-grit abrasive paper to make the ridge slimmer.



Step 6 - Attach the legs and packers

Cut the legs to the height of the backing plus the height from the floor to the base of the bedhead. Attach to the backing 500mm from the ends, using Bondcrete and six 40mm timber screws for each leg. From the offcuts, cut packers about 400mm long and attach with screws.

NATASHA'S TIP: The packers allow for the skirting board, which will prevent the bedhead from sitting flush against the wall. I added two pieces in the middle for extra support.



Step 7 - Secure the shelves

Position and mark around the shelves, then drill at least five pilot holes from the front (so you know where to secure the screws from the back). Apply Bondcrete and clamp the shelves. When they're dry, turn the bedhead over to secure with screws from the back.

NATASHA'S TIP: Flip the bedhead over, angling it so the shelves are off the table. I used batten screws, however, 40mm timber screws are also suitable.



Step 8 - Make the frame

Using the same framing technique as the shelves, cut the top mitres first, then the sides and base. Working on one piece at a time, apply Bondcrete then position it at the same height as the cladding and use long clamps or a second pair of hands to hold it while you secure it with a nails every 200mm.

NATASHA'S TIP: I experimented with positioning the framing against the ridges at different heights, but keeping it the same as the cladding minimises shadows while concealing the backing.



Step 9 - Fill the holes and sand

Use timber filler to hide the nails, leaving it to dry. Sand the frame with 180-grit abrasive paper, rounding over the edges and corners to match the profile of the shelves. Use 240-grit abrasive paper to smooth along the cladding and over the frame, then brush away the dust.

NATASHA'S TIP: Avoid sanding the top of the ridges when using 180-grit abrasive paper over the frame. I used a hairdryer to blow all the dust away then wiped along the strips with a clean cloth.



Step 10 - Seal the bedhead

Use a microfibre mini roller with a mini tray to apply one coat of Monocel Stain & Varnish in Clear and leave to dry thoroughly. Gently wipe over the surface with 240-grit, making sure to go with the grain. Use a clean cloth to remove dust then apply a second coat and leave to dry.

NATASHA'S TIP: Always use a microfibre cover for the roller and, between coats, seal it with plastic wrap to prevent it drying out.



Step 11 - Install the bedhead

Move the bedhead into place, positioning it flush against the wall and pushing the bed against it to wedge firmly.

NATASHA'S TIP: You could add brackets to attach the bedhead to the bed or D clips to secure it to the wall. I simply wiggled some rubber matting down behind packers to avoid marking the wall.



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