



DIY: Clever Room Renovation Using Porta Timber

with DIY specialist, Natasha Dickens from Little Red Industries



"I have a 3 step method that works for any renovation," says DIY specialist, Natasha Dickins, Little Red Industries. "It's about DIY with a designer eye to make a room function better. Having a practical plan helps you focus as you roll up your sleeves to get handy."

"Like many Aussie homes," explains Natasha, "The third room at my house is too small for a bedroom but is a great size for a studio office. See how easy it is to apply my 3 step DIY method to transform it into a welcoming space to work."

Natasha's 3 step room renovation method:

1. Remove the most dysfunctional factor - changing the door to a sliding one increases floorspace, and gives the opportunity to replace the heavy old trim around the room.
2. Add an element to make it more modern - cladding the door cavity in Tasmanian oak dowel creates a lovely modern feature wall.
3. Improve the function and experience - designing built-in shelving creates storage and a display area utilises the awkward space left by the new door cavity.

What you'll need:



How to make it:



Tools & Materials

Aim to have the home improvement basics, including:

- A drill with drill bits and drop saw for cutting.
- A nail gun with air compressor and brads.
- Hammer and mallet.
- Hand saw and utility knife.
- Screwdrivers, measuring tape and spirit level.
- Crowbar, chisel and scraper.
- Broom, ladder and paint equipment.

- Safety equipment (including footwear, glasses, ear muff/plugs and dust mask).

You may also need:

- Adhesive and crack filler.
- Ceiling and wall paint.
- Sandpaper.
- Timber varnish and timber screws for the framing and plywood cladding.

Timber

For our 3.5m x 2.5m room, we used:

- **Wall:** 30mm x 12mm x 2.4m Half Round Dowel in Tasmanian Oak (HR3012TOSL) QTY 45
- **Recessed Shelving:** 110mm x 18mm x 2.7m Dressed All Round in Primed Finger Jointed Pine (DAR11010PIFP) QTY 5
- **Shelving Divider:** 22mm x 3.0m Dowel in Tasmanian Oak (DOW22TOSL) QTY 1

- **Skirting:** 42mm x 11mm x 2.7m Bullnose Architrave in Primed Finger Jointed Pine (BNA4211PIFP) QTY 4
- Your material requirements may vary depending on your project and scope.

Step 1 - Remove the door

Use a drill to unscrew the hinges, removing the lower hinge first, so the door does not fall on you. If the hinges have been painted, score around the edges with a utility knife to help loosen them from the door jamb.

NATASHA'S TIP: This is the time to have the electrician move switches and power points.



Step 2 - Remove door trim and skirting

Score along the joint at the wall to prevent pulling off paint then tap a chisel or crowbar into the gap.

NATASHA'S TIP: To release the trim from the wall, use a pulling-down motion so the tip of the crowbar pushes into the wall at the base, rather than above, which can leave a mark.

Step 3 - Prepare for painting

Run a scraper around the base to remove built-up paint then fill dents and holes with fast-drying crack filler. Use a sanding block with 180-grit abrasive paper to smooth the filler and paint line.

NATASHA'S TIP: Begin at the doorway, working around the room thoroughly so you only have to do it once.

Step 4 - Paint the room

If the ceiling needs refreshing, apply a coat of ceiling paint with a long-handled roller, then paint the cornices with a brush while cutting into the ceiling, walls and corners, then apply wall paint, repeating the coats as necessary.

NATASHA'S TIP: Use a plastic-back drop sheet and wear eye protection when painting the ceiling.

Step 5 - Assemble the door cavity

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to put the door cavity together.

Buy the door and cavity ready to assemble with the frame in a standard 75mm or 90mm width. I used a 90mm Hume Doors Evolution system.

NATASHA'S TIP: Be sure to buy 35mm-thick pine framing in the same width.

Step 6 - Build the framing

To build a framework around the door cavity and ensure it's secured to wall studs safely, cut pine to fit both sides and across the top. Assemble with 60mm timber screws and use brackets to secure to the wall.

NATASHA'S TIP: You'll need about 2.7m each side, 1.8m along the top and offcuts as supports.



Step 7 - Clad the wall

Cut 12mm plywood to fit the frame and attach with screws. Then cut 30mm Half Round Dowel dowel, glue and pin with a nail gun or hammer. Sand with 180-grit abrasive paper and finish with a mini roller, microfibre cover and a protective sealer.

NATASHA'S TIP: I cut the top of my dowel pieces at 10 degrees to fit my sloping ceiling.

Step 8 - Build the shelf

To build the recessed shelf next to the new wall, measure and cut to fit 18 x 110mm DAR pine, securing it to the frame and the wall with 60mm screws.

NATASHA'S TIP: The dimensions depend on your room size, and if your shelf is more than about 900mm wide, add supports using 22mm Tasmanian oak dowel.

Step 9 - Attach the skirting boards

Measure and cut the ends at 45-degree angles using a drop saw. Work your way around the room, measuring from inside of the mitres.

NATASHA'S TIP: Set up the primed skirting outside on a table to apply a coat of paint using a mini roller. It's easier to paint outside than to avoid getting paint on the floor once installed.

Step 10 - Install the door

Add the door hardware including the rollers, lift the door into place and tighten. Paint the door outside while painting the skirting boards, using the same paint for trim.

NATASHA'S TIP: I left my door white to bounce light back into the room when it's closed but you could add a surprise pop of colour.



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