



Bow from Ash Board - making a bow out of a board, is a different kettle of fish to making one out of a fallen tree. Any cuts made by an axe or drawknife, tend to follow the growth ring, rather than cut across it - making it easy to mess up as shown in the third photo. For this reason, many like to use rasp (shown in bottom photo) and other such instruments to cut out these bows and for this reason I ask the hardwood supplier to cut it near to the bows dimensions or when searching joiners rejects, find a bit that is suited for the task.

This method of selecting timber and having it cut, is best suited to the type of bow I prefer the most - where the limbs are a constant width for most of their length. All I have to do then is draw in dimensions for the handle (6 inches) and the nocks (6 inches again, as shown in photo above).

The same principle apply for cutting out handle, i.e cut from both sides. I did this with an axe although a rasp can do just as good a job



Next the belly is cut. You could either use a power saw to cut from the nock at an angle up to the height your handle is going to be, cut it with an axe or rasp. The problem with using power tools is, mistakes are made faster because you do not really know the nature of the wood your cutting into. With an axe it is very easy to cut too much off depending on the direction and state of the growth rings your cutting into (I find that where as one limb seems easy to cut down, the other is always more problematic). A rasp is probably the best thing to use, if it is your first bow from boards, but it does take time.

Because I was using a board 1 1/2 inches square, I was cutting off about 1/2 inch from the belly. First using the camp axe to remove the larger amounts of wood, then the mini gransfors as I got nearer to the rectangular profile that I was after.

This left still quite a thick belly, but as you can see from the photo below, one limb was already bending more than the other, but only because I had been careful to leave extra width on the stiff limb to compensate for a few knots.

This photo shows me chopping at the bow around the handle. Unless you are really accurate with each chop, I would suggest you use a rasp because as the wood starts to bend, it vibrates in and out upon every cut making the possibilities of chopping to much off, greater.



As before with the yew, the wood should be cut from the handles, down towards the nock, ensuring even cuts on both sides. But this does cause problems when you get to the nocks, as shown in the photo above and is why you should leave an inch or two of wood beyond your bow final length.

From this rectangular profile, the next stage is to round the profile off to a more D shape. Sometimes you can do this with a drawknife. but only on the limb that was easier to cut with the axe. On the other limb where the axe dented to want to cut into the growth rings instead of across them, it is probably best to resort to clamping down the bow and using a rasp - the amounts of wood removed are more controllable with a rasp and are better at producing a more even profile.

Once this is done - floor tiller the bow taking off/sanding only the places where the bow does not bend - again only remove small amounts of wood after which you bend a few times to reveal the effects of that removed wood.



The next stage is cut temporary nocks where with this bow and also the yew bow, I have decided to next show three different ways to back a bow with rawhide - not totally necessary with these bows but won't harm them either.