

Basic Wood Joints

Practical skills

The joints worth knowing, by strength and by difficulty.

Ordered by strength.

Joint	Strength	Difficulty
Butt	Weak	Trivial
Butt + screws	Moderate	Easy
Pocket hole	Good	Easy, needs a jig
Dowel	Good	Moderate
Biscuit	Good alignment	Moderate
Half-lap	Strong	Moderate
Mortise and tenon	Very strong	Hard
Dovetail	Very strong	Hardest

Glue is stronger than the wood on long-grain joints and weak on end grain. That single fact explains why joints exist.