

TEST

Trend offset bases

Wonderful tool that the router is, there are certain times when the user has to be particularly vigilant to ensure that it remains under control and operates safely.

An example of this is when moulding or rebating an edge. Nowadays, most moulding cutters and rebate cutters are bearing-guided. They can be used without a side fence, and will work as efficiently on curved and shaped edges as they will on straight workpieces. A problem still remains, however, because the cutter functions on the edge of the wood, and the router is used with only half of its normal base resting on the material and half clear of it. This raises the question of adequate control, as the router is in effect being used when it is out of balance. If it tilts by only a few degrees, there is a danger that the moulding will be spoilt.

Trend has come up with the answer, however. The offset base is a pear-shaped base-plate extension, measuring around 280mm in length, and 180mm at its widest point. The knob at the narrow end offers a secure handhold.

The offset base is secured to the router base using a couple of screws, and though simple is very effective. The base straddles the workpiece, giving plenty of leverage at the knob with which you can control the router's balance to keep it in close contact with the workpiece and thus prevent tilt.

Fine tuning to trenches

Another basic use of the router in cabinetmaking is in forming trenches. The width of these trenches must match the thickness of the material, but as the thickness of the material used can vary slightly, the difficulty here comes when you can't find a cutter of the right diameter to exactly match the thickness of the material. Trying to form a trench by making a first pass and then trying to widen it by fractionally moving the router and its guide is not as simple as it might seem.

Trend has come up with a solution in the form of another plastic base. This has six sides, and there is a line-up pin to ensure that the base is absolutely centred on the arbor. The shank of the arbor itself is stepped to give diameters of 1/4" and 8mm, and the pan-head screws by which it is secured allow for marginal adjustments to fit to be made.

When forming a trench with a router, it's usual to have a guide rail or batten secured to the workpiece in order to control the movement of the tool across the wood. Trend's cunning hexagonal trenching base works by allowing you to offset the router from this rail by increments of 1mm. How? Well, the base is eccentric to the cutter such that the bit is 100mm from the base's first side, 101mm from its second side, 102mm from its third side. You can see, then, that by making a pass using the first side against the



guide, and then rotating the router to the next side of the hexagon, the trench will be widened by 1mm. By rotating once more, the trench will be widened by a further 1mm, and so on up to a maximum offset of 5mm. Thus there is plenty of scope for adjusting the trench width to match the wood.

The base doesn't affect the operation of the router (although this base cannot be used in conjunction with a side fence), but the guide rail used to control the router must normally be secured to the left-hand side of the intended trench.

Easy fit

Both of the bases are made of 8mm thick clear PETG plastic, and are pre-drilled to match the tapped holes in Trend, Elu and DeWalt routers. However, the plastic can easily be re-drilled to suit virtually all makes of router. The bases are easy to use and take only a few moments to secure in place.

VERDICT

As with so many good ideas, these are simple and effective devices that solve difficulties commonly encountered when using the router for certain operations. The trenching base in effect makes a cutter adjustable, enabling trenches of up to 5mm wider than the diameter of the cutter to be formed. Quality of the tools is excellent, and this always has to be paid for.

List price:

Offset base £19.95

Offset trenching base £19.95

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The offset base is quickly fitted to the router...



...and gives greater control over the router when moulding the edge of a board



The trenching base is secured to underside of router and positioned using the alignment pin

