

THICKNESSER AND JOINTER - WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

A **thicknesser** is designed to change a board's thickness by milling across the wide face of the board to a specific size, (so, technically a *thin*-nesser) - it takes a thick board and makes it thinner.

To use a *thicknesser*, the board should already have one flat side. That smooth side goes down onto the bed, and the *thicknesser* cuts slices off the top (unsmoothed) side. In other words, you *put a board into the planer to make it thinner after you have already established one flat side using the jointer* (or a hand plane.) At the same time, the *thicknesser* will also make the rough side both smooth, and parallel, to the other side. These machines are sometimes called *planers*.

In simple terms, a **jointer** is used to square up a 'to-be joined' edge of a board, but it is also used to flatten the first face of a wide board, before using a *thicknesser*.

It is a motorized hand plane turned upside down. It does exactly what a hand plane does, except that you move the wood across it instead of moving it across the wood. A *jointer* creates a flat surface on wood. It can also be used to correct bow and warp on one side of a board at a time.

An old term for a *jointer* is *buzzer*, referring to the loud buzzing noise produced as they cut.

Do you need both?

If you are hoping to take oversize or rough sawn, warped and twisted stock and make usable boards from it, you will need the assistance of both a ***thicknesser and jointer*** at some stage (or a lot patience and the upper body workout provided by a traditional unplugged hand plane process).

If you are just using a *thicknesser*, it will do a great job of mirroring the opposite face of your board - if you put a banana in, you'll get a thinner banana out.

Which do you want?

That depends on your hand tool skills and your level of energy.

If you are skilled enough to flatten boards first with a hand plane, you could make do with just a planer. Of course, if you are really good with a hand plane and very energetic, you can use it to eliminate both tools. Bear in mind that power tools simply do what an equivalent hand tool does, but they use a motor to make the job go faster and easier.
