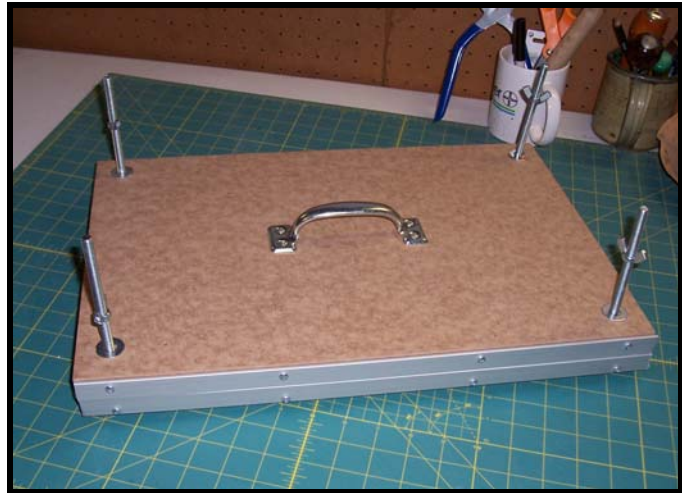


A VISUAL GUIDE: HOW TO MAKE A SIMPLE BOOK PRESS

This little guide will walk you through the steps to making your own simple book press. With a little patience and a few tools you can have your own press put together in a little over an hour. All the materials for the press can be gotten from your local hardware store for less than \$15.00



Materials Needed:

(All materials can be found locally at hardware stores)

- 2 - pieces 3/4" MDF or plywood
- 2 - pieces aluminum flat bar (optional)
- 4 - 5/16" x 6" carriage bolts
- 4 - 5/16" washers
- 4 - 5/16" wing nuts
- 1 - 5 1/2" handle
- 1 - Pkg No 6 x 5/8" Sheet metal screws
- Double sided tape (optional) (not shown)



Tools Needed:

- Drill with bits
- Screwdriver
- Hack saw or similar to cut metal (optional)
- Metal file (optional) (not shown)
- Hammer
- Safety glasses (not shown)
- Ruler (not shown)
- Pencil/pen for marking (not shown)

Assembling Materials

I got all my supplies at the local Home Depot store. (No affiliation. Just find it fun to shop there.) The total cost was Less than \$15.00.

For the press you see in the photos I used 3/4" MDF (medium density fiberboard). You can also use plywood and some shelving materials. I chose MDF because it is heavy and really inexpensive. Weight is an important factor in deciding what material to use for your press. You do not want to use lightweight shelving board such as pine because, even though you are putting pressure on your book by tightening the wing nuts you still need the weight to help give an even pressure.

The MDF board that I bought was a piece that was 12" wide by 4' long. Most presses you can buy are about 10" wide by 16" long. I bought the 12" board because it was all they offered in standard MDF. They did have some 10" wide board with a coating made for shelving but it was 3x the price and I didn't like the one rounded edge it had.

Since I had bought the 12" wide board I decided to make the press 12" wide x 18" long. I figured that any book I would press would be no taller than 14" so this was a good width choice for me.

I had the clerk at the Home Depot cut off 2 18" long pieces from the board I was buying. You can do this at home but why bother dragging out the saw when they can do it at the store in less than 5 mins. (Takes longer to find someone to cut the board than it does for them to cut it.)

Tip: Sometimes the boards are a little crooked on the cut ends. Have the clerk cut off a 3-4" piece at one end before they cut the 2 18" pieces. This will ensure that the two 18" pieces have square ends.

The Home Depot has 3/4" pieces of flat bar aluminum in 3' lengths. You'll need some sort of metal cutting saw, such as a hack saw, to cut this material.

Adding the flat bars is an optional feature. It is used to set the little groove you see on books that run parallel to the spine. It helps traditional books open easier. On books that are made properly the groove will show up on it's own. Pressing a bar into the groove just helps set it. You can make the press without this feature. For me it's not important to add the bars as I use knitting needles to set my groves. (Yes, I said knitting needles.) For the sake of this tutorial I am adding the bars. (PS...if you use knitting needles be sure to cut off the round end buttons before use.)



That Groove



That Groove with knitting needles ready to be pressed



That Groove under flat bars in the press.

Assembling Materials (cont.)

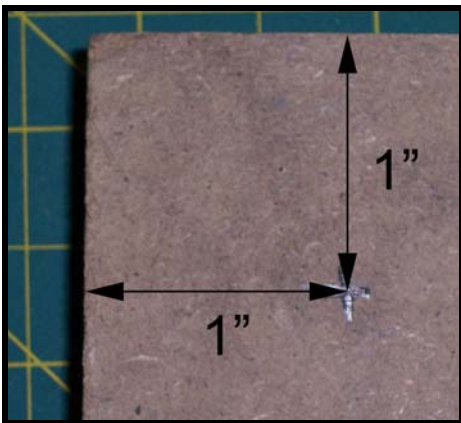
You'll also need to get 4 carriage bolts with washers and wing nuts to fit. I bought 5/16" bolts 6" long.

If you are adding the flat bars you will need screws. I bought a pack of No 6 - 5/8" sheet metal screws.

You'll also need some sort of handle. The one I bought is 5 1/2" long. Unless you are making a mega press then that should be sufficient.

Let's get started!

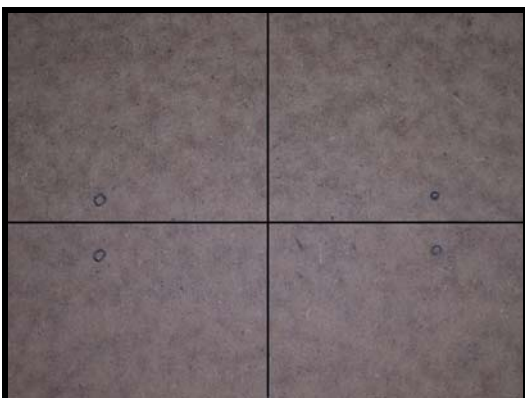
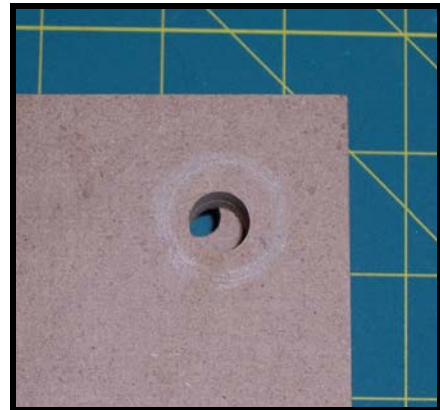
First thing you'll need to do is measure and drill a hole on each corner of both boards.



You'll need to measure 1" in from each edge and put a mark where they intersect.

Using a drill with a 3/8" drill bit. Center the bit where the marks intersect and drill each hole.

Important: Always wear safety glasses when doing any sort of cutting or drilling.



Next, decide which piece will be the top. Find the center of the board and draw lines to mark it. Lay the handle down centering it and mark where the drill holes will go.

Using the suggested size drill bit, drill the holes for the handle being careful not to drill all the way through the board.



Attach the handle. You are now ready to put the press together.

To assemble the press, push the carriage bolts through the holes in both boards from the bottom. Put the washer on the bolt and then the wing nut.



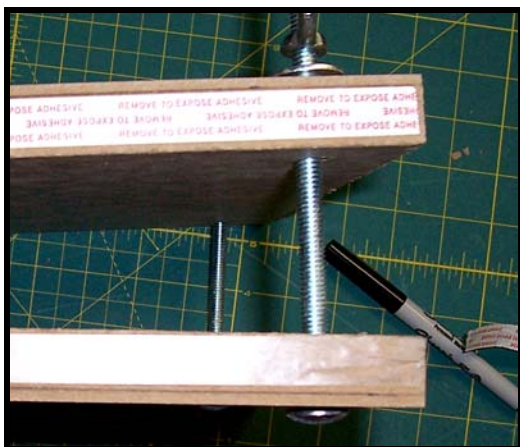
At this point you can stop and be finished if you have decided not to add the flat bars. You will have a nice functional book press. It's time to stand back and admire your work and say to out loud to yourself or the family pet..."Wow, that was easy."

If, o' intrepid do it yourselfer, you decide to add the flat bars then...read on.

Attaching the flat bars:

First thing you'll need to do is cut your pieces of flat bar using a hack saw or any other saw that will cut metal. I would suggest cutting your pieces approx. 1/8" - 1/4" shorter than the width of your press. That way they'll be certain not to hang over the edge. Once cut, you'll want to smooth the edges with a file.

Important: Always wear safety glasses when cutting and filing metal as there will be sharp bits flying about.



Leave the press put together and turn it on it's side with the edge facing up where you will be applying the flat bar.

First, you'll need to draw a line 1/8" in from the outside edge of each board. The reason you do this is because you want the metal to protrude into the inside of the press 1/8".

Next, attach a piece of double stick tape onto the board inside the line you just drew on each board. The double stick tape holds the bar in place while you drill holes and attach screws.



Line the metal flat bar up with the line and center it between the ends. Then down press so that the tape holds securely.

Using a permanent marker, measure and mark where you will be drilling the holes for your screws.

Measure 3/8" in from the outside edge of the flat bar that is attached to the board. (i.e.: not the edges that protrude to the inside of the press.)

Mark your holes as follows: from each end measure in 1" and 6" and make a mark on the line. You should have four marks total.

It is time to drill.

The package for the screws says to use a drill bit of 3/32" but I found that the holes weren't quite big enough so I used a bit of 7/64" which is one size larger in my set. My suggestion would be to start with the suggested size and see if the screws will go in. If the holes seem too tight then move up a size being careful not to get them too big or the screws won't hold.

Important: Always wear safety glasses when drilling metal as there will be sharp bits flying about.

Once you have all the holes drilled attach the screws. You can use your drill with a screw driver bit but I found a simple ratchet screw driver worked best for attaching the screws.



That's it! Enjoy your new press!

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