

Replacing the Tack Strip Around the Seat

If you ever need to replace the wood in a Model T body you will find that it is quite challenging, yet rewarding. One of the most important pieces of wood is the tack strip that goes around the seat. On Model T's made from 1911-1921, this tack strip was originally made of hardwood, steam bent to the proper shape. When replacing this tack strip most people do not have a steam bender, so an alternate method of making this strip of wood is necessary.

I have found that the cheapest and easiest way to form the tack strip is to use 1/8" plywood, laminated together. First make a template of the shape of the tack strip from a piece of pliable cardboard. Overlay the cardboard where the tack strip would go on the body, and then cut the cardboard out. Once cut out, double check to see that the cardboard template matches the contour of the body and the shape necessary. It is easiest to make the entire tack strip in three pieces, using the laminated plywood ONLY on the "bent" portion of the tack strip and a straight piece of hardwood along the back of the seat.

Once the measurements are made, take the template and trace the shape onto the 1/8" plywood (see the drawing). Cut out six pieces of plywood and then glue the pieces together to form the laminated tack strip. Regular "Elmer's" type wood glue works very well for this. Clamp the tack strip to the body to form the curves as soon as possible because the glue sets up quickly. It is best if you use a clamp about every 6 inches.

When the glue is dry, take the rough tack strip off and sand the rough edges with a belt sander. Then apply some type of sealer (ie: Thompson's Water Seal) on the laminated tack strip and install on the body.

You will find that the tack strip is very strong and inexpensive to make. I have had this type of tack strip on my Fords for over 20 years with no problems, and I encourage anyone to try this method of making a tack strip.

