



Wantin' Mental Divide

If you want to spice up your marriage, try building a privacy screen.

It restores a sense of separateness to two lives that have become so entwined that no one even says 'Excuse me' after a surprising body noise.



Privacy screens are also great for disguising messes in a hurry, whipping up a makeshift bedroom for surprise houseguests, or for slipping behind right after you've said "I'll just slip into something a little more comfortable".

Materials:

- Six 1"x4" pine boards, 6 feet long
- Four 2"x1/2" brass hinges
- 12' of 1/2" doweling
- Glue
- Grass cloth, fabric or rice paper for screen material
- 24 brass grommets

Tools

- Compass
- Jig saw
- Sandpaper
- Cornering tool
- Back saw
- Drill
- Screwdriver
- Hammer
- Safety glasses
- Grommet maker kit
- Gripper mat
- Clamps

Tools you might not be familiar with:



Cornering tool



Back Saw

Steps:



Mark the center of the board before using the compass to scribe an arc.



A compass.



Use a compass to make an arched cut line.

Lay each of your six pine boards out on your work surface. Centre your compass point near one end of each board then mark an arc.



Cut the arched end using a jig saw.



Rough end before it has been sanded.



Sand cuts using a sanding bow or block.

Cut on the line with a jig saw (or a coping saw if that's what you have), keeping the line as smooth as possible. Sand the edges of each curve, taking out any bumps, wavers or rough spots. Cut each of the boards to the same length - 5' is standard.



Use a cornering tool, sand paper or a plane to remove the sharp edge.



A cornering tool has two sizes of cutters for rounding sharp edges.

Use sandpaper or a cornering tool to smooth the edges of each board. This is one of those surprising details that will immediately make your project look much more polished.

Cornering tools are available at specialty woodworking suppliers like [Lee Valley Tools](#) or [Woodcraft](#).



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Drill a hole for the dowell in both sides using a backer board .



Roll a piece of sand paper to clean up the hole after drilling.

Measure and mark the center of each board 2 1/2" down from the top, and 5 1/2" up from the bottom. Drill 1/2" holes through the wood on each of these marks.

Tip: When the drill bit bursts through the bottom of the board it usually splits and tears the wood around the hole.

Don't let this happen to you. Put a scrap piece of wood underneath your good board and clamp them together. The drill bit will then tear up the scrap piece instead of your good board.

Sand the edges of each drilled hole to remove any rogue wood fibres.



Cut a slot in the end of the dowell using a back saw.



Cut the slot deep enough to make it easy to slip in the hole.

Cut dowelling into 24" lengths.

(Optional but helpful step)

Using a fine-toothed back saw (which has a spine to make it less flexible), slice a 1/2" deep saw cut into the end of each dowel to enable it to compress a bit when you're sliding it into the hole.





Apply glue to the end of the dowels.



Pound the dowels into the hole using a wooden mallet.



Clean up the excess glue.



Completed arched ends with dowels.

Spread a thin layer of glue on the last half inch of each dowel, and force the dowels into the 1/2" holes. Clean up any excess glue with a damp cloth. You now have three separate panels.

Take a moment to drink beer and strut.



Grommets, block or seat, set and punch - top to bottom.

Cut enough rice paper, grass cloth or lace to fit each panel. Install four grommets through the material at the top and bottom of each panel using a grommetting kit (available in hardware and craft stores for about \$15).

If you prefer not to use grommets, you can punch holes in the lace or paper and drive a short piece of 1/4" doweling through the two holes. This is a slick design detail and gets you out of any sewing.



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Use the punch to cut a hole for the grommet.



Place the grommet on the block or seat and then use the set to crimp.



Crimp the grommet together using the set and the block or seat.



Use a small flat screwdriver to help remove the set after crimping.

To grommet: Punch a hole in the material using the punch. (Put a piece of scrap wood under your work so that you don't wound your work surface.)

Slide the protruding 'male' grommet-piece underneath the hole so that it sticks up through looking proud and perky. Pop a 'female' grommet-piece on top of it. Place the 'seat' under the male grommet-piece and place the 'set' on top of the female grommet-piece.

Pound on the top of the set with a hammer.

Use authoritative strikes; otherwise the grommet won't 'take'. Pry the set loose using a small screwdriver if it gets stuck.



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Clamp the sides together, install the hinges, start the holes with the point of the compass.



Drive the screws in being careful not to strip the soft metal or soft wood.



Attach the grass cloth to the screen using a bent and pounded copper wire.

Clamp two of the panels together and install the hinges. Hinging can be trickier than it looks. Take your time to line the hinge up accurately, then give each screw a good start by using the pointy end of your compass to make a dimple in the wood.

Since brass is very soft, install the brass screws using a hand screwdriver, not a power drill; this will help you to avoid chewing up the heads of the screws.

Also, be careful not to over-tighten them to the point where they are spinning in place. Because then if there's any sudden force put on the screen - say, while you're performing an energetic striptease, the screws suddenly pull out.

Nobody likes a sudden pull out.



Finished Screen.

Attach the third panel to the first two, taking care to install the hinges on the opposite edge from the first set, so that the screen holds a zig-zag shape when open.



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