Scroll Me Over

For the average person, looking into mirrors causes more pain than getting Pop Tarts out of the toaster.
The only way to change this alarming statistic is to burn more Pop Tarts, or get a new mirror.

The ideal mirror is small and asymmetrical, so you see only a limited amount of your reflection at once, and the lopsided shape of the mirror frame makes your face look balanced in comparison.
You can't buy lopsided mirrors anywhere so you'll have to craft your own. This is good because you can add custom features. For example, I have crooked eyebrows, so I made my frame especially erratic at the top, this makes my eyebrows look trim and svelte.

Materials:

- 1x 6 pine
- 2 mil mirror to fit size of frame
- Four 2 ½" or 3" wood screws
- Three 1 ½" wood screws
- Glue
- Desired finish
- Four 1 ½" finish nails
- Eight ½" pan-head brass screws
- 2 copper plumbing clamps for ½ inch pipe
- Copper plumber's tape

Cut List:

Cut a randomly curving line down the middle of 1"x 6" pine boards to give you the following:

- **Frame** - 2 pieces about 24 inches long, plus 2 pieces about 16 inches long
- **Shelf** - 1 piece at about 26 inches
- **Shelf brackets** - 2 pieces at 5 inches

Tools

- Scroll saw and a variety of blades
- Drill
- Drill bits
- Driver bits
- Carpenter's square
- Safety glasses
- Latex gloves
- Pencil
- Two clamps
- Ear protection
- Router
- Router bit
- Non-skid mat
- Hammer
- Nail set
- Tin snips
- Needle nosed pliers
- Hand screwdriver

Steps:


Mag demonstrating a scroll saw


Close-up of scroll saw


Mag's first mirror finished with analine dyes

Set up the saw at a height just below eye level so that you can see easily while standing and making cuts. Be sure to have a good source of light from two directions so that shadows don't obscure the view of the blade. Practice with some scrap wood to get the feel of the saw. Play with the tension on the blade and with different blades.

Different blades have more or fewer teeth per inch, and work differently depending on the type of wood you're using. Practice making curves and swirls in the variety of wood you intend to use for your mirror frame.

Work freehand - draw cut lines on the board and attempt to follow them with the saw.


Close-up of a curved joint cut with a scroll saw

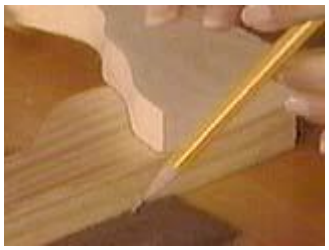

Cutting to a drawn cut-line


The first completed cut

Cut the boards for the four frame pieces larger than the desired outside width and height of the finished frame because you'll need extra room for cutting the wavy joints.

Draw cut lines on each of the four frame pieces and follow the lines on the scroll saw, or go freehand and just see what happens (recommended!).

Place the top and bottom pieces on top of the sides and use a square for alignment



Once the frame is in position, trace the shape of the top piece onto the one below

Trace all four corners

Lay the boards out to determine how you want the corners to fit together. Place the boards so that the side pieces fit inside the top and bottom pieces (this way the screws won't show when you screw them together).

Place the sides on the table first and the top and bottom on top of them. Use a carpenters square on the outside edges so that the frame is square. At the corners, trace the wavy pattern of the top and bottom pieces onto the side pieces.

Carefully cut along the scribed lines

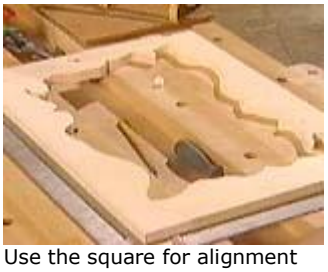
When finished, the joint should fit snugly together

Go back to your scroll saw and cut carefully cut along the lines drawn on the side pieces. The more precise your cuts are, the tighter the joint will fit when you glue the pieces together.


Apply glue to the joint


Use carpenters glue on both sides of the joint


Push the pieces together


Use the square for alignment

After cutting, place the pieces on a flat surface and check the joints for accuracy. As long as most of the surface is touching, the frame should glue together quite well. Apply glue to all the surfaces that touch. There should be eight surfaces total.

Then, put the pieces in place and check their position using the square.


Clamp and let the glue dry overnight


Screw the corners together from the top and the bottom for added strength


Place the frame on a non-skid mat for routing

When the joints are as good as they can be, clamp the pieces together. While the glue is still wet, sand the surface and the dust from sanding will fill any open gaps and be held in place by the glue. Let the glue set up overnight. Remove the clamps.

Drill holes from the top and bottom edge of the frame using a countersink bit and drive in a long screw. The hole may have to be very deep for the screw to reach the side pieces. Screws are necessary because the frame will be holding the weight of the glass mirror and a bottom shelf.

After the frame is screwed together, place it on a non-skid mat in preparation for routing.


Use a router to give a decorative edge to the inside of the frame


Choose a router bit with a guide wheel on the bottom


There are many types of bits to choose from


Rout the top and the bottom edge of the shelf

All routers are different and so it is important to follow the manufacturers directions in using them so, read up or get a lesson from an experienced router enthusiast. Next, cut a shelf out of one by six pine. The shelf should be about two inches longer than the width of the frame. Rout the edges on three sides. If desired, the edges can be routed from both the bottom and the top giving an unusual but perky look.


Use a scroll saw to cut brackets and a router to give the same edge as the shelf


Center the shelf under the mirror and attach it with screws

Make two brackets to fit under the shelf using the scroll saw and router. Rout the edge of the brackets from both sides to look like the shelf. The brackets should be about five inches square before you scroll them into a traditional 'S' shape.

Clamp the brackets to the shelf about five inches in from the end and pre drill through the top of the shelf into the brackets. Use glue on the touching surfaces. Drive in finishing nails and set them so the heads are slightly below the level of the wood surface.

Attach the shelf to the bottom of the mirror frame with glue and screws. Predrill and counter sink three or four holes for 1-½ inch screws. Be sure the back of the shelf is flush with the back of the frame and that the shelf is centered as well. Sand, and then apply the desired finish.


Cut a copper plumbing clamp in half to fashion a mirror clip


Bend it in a Z shape to fit over the mirror


Cut and bend once more so that it will fit over the corner of the mirror

Either cut the mirror yourself with a glass cutting tool, or have the mirror cut to the size necessary to cover the opening in the frame. Attach it with clips to the back.

Most mirror clips are bulky but smaller-profile clips can be made out of copper plumbing clamps. Copper is soft and easy to work with so it's relatively easy to improvise a clip that will hold the glass in place.

Cut a plumbing clamp in half leaving two pieces, each with a pre-drilled hole. Bend one piece into a 'Z' shape, with two right angles, that will just fit over the glass when the end with the hole in it is pressed against the wood. Cut a slit half way through the width of the clip at the angle. Bend the flap over the glass. Use needle nose pliers to bend another right angle down so that the clip now covers two edges of the glass at the corner.

Repeat, making one clip for each corner.


Attach the clip and mirror with small brass screws


Attach pre-drilled copper plumber's tape to the back for hanging


Finished mirror with shelf and brackets

Attach the glass with the clips. Drive ½" pan-head brass screws through each pre-drilled hole to
hold the clips firmly in place. To hang the mirror, cut two pieces of copper plumber's tape about two inches long. Attach them to the back of the mirror frame with brass screws. Leave enough of the tape free at one end that it can be hooked over the head of a nail or screw in the wall. Take a glance in the mirror and reflect on the beauty and originality of asymmetry.