



Reading Frenzy

This easy-to-make bathtub accessory offers a brilliant remedy for stress along with safe stowage for candles and a glass of wine!

Materials:

- Cherry wood - 8" x 32"
- Copper refrigerator tubing - 3/16" outside dimension (or 1/4" if that's all you can find)
- Heavy gauge copper wire - about 12 gauge
- Oak half round - 6'
- Light oak filler
- Carpenter's glue
- Rare earth magnet
- Sand paper
- Water-based urethane
- Epoxy glue

Tools

- Jigsaw
- Router
- Bull-nose router bit
- Drill & drill bits
- Rotary tool (i.e. Dremel)
- Belt sander
- Orbital sander
- Paintbrush
- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Clamps
- Miter box and handsaw
- Tube cutter

Steps:



Choose a flat, clear piece of cherry

Choose a piece of wood that is as flat and as clear of knots as possible. If the board is terribly twisted, ask the lumberyard to run it through their thickness planer for you. This will effectively take the warp out. If you want to prepare it yourself, use a plane or power planer to take down the high points until the board lies flat.



Typical plunge router



Router bit set



Move around the outside of the board in a counter clockwise direction

Prep the surface as necessary using a belt sander to take out deep chips and scratches. Before final sanding, use a router mounted with a bull nose bit to round over the outside edge. Following the directions for your router, clamp the board firmly in place and run the router in a counter-clockwise direction around the board. Move the router along quickly so as not to burn the wood. The bit spins so fast that it will leave burn marks if left in one spot too long. If the router jumps or dances a bit, which happens especially around corners, just go over it again.

Sand the surface and edges of the board progressively through increasingly fine grades of sandpaper, up to 220 grit.



Cut the half round in a miter box

Cut the half round to fit. If you have a bathtub that fits tight to one wall, cut just two pieces to fit around the exposed outer rim. If you have a freestanding tub that is positioned away from the wall, cut two sets of rails to run along each side of the tub. Cut the pieces about half an inch short of the width of the cherry board.

While you're cutting the oak half round, cut two additional pieces to act as ridges that catch the bottom of a book and hold it in place. Use a miter box to cut all of them with a forty-five degree slope at the ends. This gives you a pleasing design with no sharp edges anywhere on the tray.

Fill the exposed surface of all of the half round pieces with a light oak filler, since oak is rather open-grained. Sand smooth to at least 220 grit. Also, fill any unsightly pits in the cherry wood with the same filler.

Attach the runners to the bottom with carpenter's glue. The bottom runners should be placed so that they fit snugly on either side of the bathtub edges. If both edges of the tub are exposed, centre the



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tray first to locate the position of the four pieces and glue them in place. Clamp for at least 20 minutes before continuing. Glue the book rests to the top.

Tip: If you have a tub that is pushed against the wall, merely measuring the board to find the center and plopping the book ledge isn't going to work. The book will be off-center, and this will be annoying. To avoid irritation, place the tray on the bathtub first, find the centre of the TUB and transfer that location to the board as it sits with one edge pressed against the wall. If, on the other hand, your tub is freestanding, the centre of the actual board will fall over the centre of the tub.



Cut a template for the glass holder



Trace the shape on to the back holder

After all of the half round has been attached, locate the position for the wine glass holder. The wine glass should be away from the side that is commonly used to enter the tub but not so close that the base of the glass bumps the tub side while in place. Make a template out of paper to fit the size of the glass and its stem.

Generally, the diameter of the hole where the glass rests should be about 1 3/4" and the width of the slot leading to the hole should be about 5/8" wide. The circular hole should be positioned slightly less than halfway through the width of the whole tray.



Cut out the shape with a scrolling blade in a jig saw



Drill holes as necessary to help start the blade

After making the template and locating the best position for the wine glass, turn the board over, mark and cut it from the back with the jigsaw. Use a 'scrolling' jigsaw blade to cut out the shape. It'll be necessary especially for the tight circle. Jigsaw blades cut on the up stroke and can tear out bits of fiber from the nicely sanded surface, but if the cuts are made wrong side up, the tear-out will be on the back where it won't be seen.





The cut will be rough



Hand sand the rough edges



A rotary tool with a small sanding drum also works very well

Once the wineglass holder hole has been cut out, sand any rough spots made by the jigsaw. Hand sand with sand paper on a stick or use a rotary tool with a sanding drum to smooth the rough spots.



Use copper tubing to form the book frame



Cut the copper with a tube cutter



Bend book holder to shape

Make the book support from refrigerator tubing. Cut off a length about thirty inches long with the tube cutter. Bend a shape by hand (see picture). The bends help to make the soft copper more rigid so that it can support a book. The height will be determined by the sizes of books you may want to read in the tub. Once bent to shape, cut the ends off so that that each side has a 10" leg after bending. The distance between the sides at the top is about 6 1/2". The space at the bottom is about 3". It helps to have the bottom closer together because the frame becomes more rigid and will support the book better.

Coil some of the 12 gauge wire around the frame at the height of the books you read. The wire can be slid up or down as necessary once the frame is in place. Put loops in the ends to hold the pages in place.

Locate and drill two holes in the board to fit the tubular book frame. The base holes should be about 3 1/4" apart, 1 1/2" in from the back edge and 3/16" in diameter (or to fit the tubing you are using). Be sure not to drill all the way through the board! About half way should do. If the holes are tight, the book frame will sit in the holes without glue.





Attach accessories with epoxy



Pen holder



Magnet on the bottom

If your tray requires a magnet or if you want a penholder, glue them in place with epoxy. Be sure to locate the magnet so that it hits the tub edge accurately. (Your tub has to be enameled cast iron for the magnet to work.)



Clear coat with 3 coats of water-based urethane to seal thoroughly

Clear coat all surfaces with at least three coats of a water based urethane. Follow the directions on the can and sand smooth between coats with a fine 320 grit sand paper.



Completed tray

Now add bubble bath, a robust Zinfandel and a stirring novel. Relaxation is yours.



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