



Bed Head

Enhance your horizontal hours with a handmade headboard!

Building a headboard is really easy, costs a fraction of what a store-bought headboard costs, and you can have it in any colour because you are the master designer here. And the head painter. And the head sleeper. So you can add any built-in option you want, including cupholders, reading lamps, speakers and a hands-free phone.

Materials:

- ½" plywood
- Carpenter's glue
- 2" x 4" lumber
- Tin panels and trim pieces
- Escutcheon pins
- 2" screws
- Finish nails (shelf)

Tools

- Circular saw or jigsaw
- Hammer
- Nail set
- Needlenose pliers
- Tin snips
- Drill and bits

Tin Credible!

The secret to this headboard is the tin panels which are painted and then affixed to a plywood backing. Decorative tin can be purchased online from Canadian tinsmith [Brian Grier](#) - (519) 743-9710. A 2' x 2' panel is about \$16.00. Crown moulding and edging trim are also available from Brian.

Your Measurements

First, measure the width of your mattress. Design your headboard to be at least as wide as your mattress, and it's actually more aesthetically pleasing if it's a bit wider. Height is up to you, but if you make it too tall, it looks kind of gothic and weird.

Lay out the tin panels to fit the approximate dimensions of your headboard. Add some trim and crown moulding, then take a final measurement of the tin layout. Cut your plywood to correspond with those measurements.

Steps:



Attach 2 x 4s along the sides

If you're making a headboard for a double, queen or king bed, you may need to join two pieces of plywood to get the required width. You can "scab" the two pieces of plywood together with a 2" x 4" board placed over the seam, then glued and screwed to the plywood.

Stiffen the back of the plywood with vertical 2" x 4" boards glued and screwed along the two side edges on the back of the plywood. The 2" x 4" boards should line up with the mounting holes in your metal bedframe.



Attach a 2 x 4 or 2 x 2 along the top to support the 1 x 8 shelf



Attach a 1 x 8 shelf along the top

Crowning Example

To install crown moulding along the top of the headboard, you'll need a horizontal shelf to catch the top edge of the crown. It's difficult to screw the shelf to the edge of plywood, so give the shelf something to attach to; Screw a 2" x 2" pine strip along the top edge of the plywood between the vertical 2" x 4"s, and then attach a horizontal 1" x 8" pine board on top to act as a shelf.





Cut out a triangular piece to cap the end of the crown molding



Mark the shape of the crown on a piece of pine



Attach it in place with glue, screws and nails

Make triangular pieces to cap the ends of the crown by tracing the shape on a scrap piece of pine. If your crown requires a seam in the centre, make a support piece for the joint by tracing the exact shape of the crown on a scrap of wood, cut it out and attach it under the joint.



Raw tin and primed tin



Tin with milk paint



Highlight with a lighter coloured milk paint

Paint of Heart

After cleaning it well with rubbing alcohol or Windex, prime all the tin with a water-based metal primer. Once it's dry, paint the tin whatever colour you like, then apply a light brushing of a contrasting colour to pick up the detail and depth of the tin design. While you've got the paint out, coat the exposed surfaces of the top shelf as well.



More free plans from ToolGirl



Place the trim and tack the pieces in place with escutcheon pins



Escutcheon pins



Hold the pins with needle-nose pliers to start them



Use a nail set to drive the escutcheon pin flush

Attaching the Tin

Starting at the top of the headboard, install the crown moulding first. Nail it in place using brass-coated escutcheon pins. These are tiny, so to avoid smashing your fingers, hold the escutcheon pins in place with a pair of needle-nose pliers while you whack 'em with a hammer. Cap the ends of the crown moulding with triangular blocks of wood painted the same colour as the tin.



Place the centre panels leaving room for the trim



Cut down the square panels if necessary



Attach a piece of trim along the edge

Lay out a line of trim under the crown moulding, and place the square panels underneath it, tweaking all the pieces so they line up properly. Lay trim over all of the exposed edges so there are no sharp edges to cut soft body parts. Tack all the tin in place with escutcheon pins. Then cover the outside edges with 2" trim. Paint out any exposed wood and touch up the nail heads.

Tip:

Be careful to keep the tin very square as you install it, because it wants to migrate and you could be so mad you might utter coarse epithets.



More free plans from ToolGirl



Attach the headboard to the frame



Use a carriage bolt through the headboard and frame

Frame and Fortune

Finally, set the headboard in place against the bedframe. Mark the headboard where it contacts the mounting holes in the metal frame. Then pull the headboard away and pre-drill holes in the headboard to fit the size of carriage bolts that your bed frame will hold - usually one-quarter inch bolts do the trick.

Slide the headboard back into position against the bedframe, install carriage bolts with fender washers and wing nuts.



Round over any sharp edges with pliers...



...and then tap the fold down with a hammer

Tip:

Turn any sharp edges under using needlenose pliers and tap the fold down with a hammer.



Detail of a 2 foot square panel



Detail of crown molding and trim

You've done it! You're headboard-enabled!



More free plans from ToolGirl