



All Throne Up

Wicked kids' furniture with invincible upholstery

I'm nobody's mother but I'm everybody's favourite carpenter aunt. This project is one reason why. You and a young helper can give this plywood throne any wacked-out, billowy shape you like. Then glue little bits of fabric all over it so it looks like a real armchair, EXCEPT that no matter what spills on it, there are no cleaning bills.

Materials:

- 4' x 4' sheet of 3/4" plywood
- Glue - for the wooden frame
- Matte acrylic artists medium - used to attach the fabric
- Dozen 1-1/4" screws
- Fabric

Tools

- Jigsaw with scrolling blade
- Drill and bits
- Safety equipment
- Clamps
- Square
- Measuring tape
- Pencil

Dimension Guidelines:

- 27" - height of sides
- 12" - height of seat, measured from the ground
- 11" - depth of seat
- 24" - approximate overall width of throne

Steps:



Drawing tools - if you don't trust the closed-eye method



Draw out the shape for the sides



Mark the height for the seat

Eyes Wide Shut

This project provides the opportunity of designing with your eyes shut, because any shape will do, so you can't go wrong even if you're not looking. And later, if it turns out badly, you can say "It's pretty good considering I had my eyes closed."

To start, stand over your plywood and put a pencil on one edge about 27" up from the bottom. Close your eyes. Make a swirly, loopy shape that vaguely resembles the profile of an armchair. Open your eyes. Celebrate the goofiness of your Dr. Seuss-like creation.



Jigsaw with scrolling blade



Cut out the shapes using the jigsaw



First side cut out



Lay out the second side as a mirror image



Leave enough room between sidepieces to form the back



Trace the second piece onto the plywood

Cut along the line with a jigsaw, and then use the cutout piece to trace a mirror image for the other side. (Or make the second one asymmetrical if that's the mood you're in.) The leftover plywood between your two side cutouts can be used to form the back of the throne, so make sure it's wide enough to accommodate your little one's bottom. (Now is the time when you may have to subtly measure the beam of the child you're making the throne for.)



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Notch the sides to accept the back

Notch So Fast

After you've cut out the main pieces, try fitting them together. The back piece protrudes gawkily from the sides, so cut $\frac{3}{4}$ " notches along the back edges of the sidepieces (between the top edge and the approximate height of the seat) so the back can be attached flush with the sides. The back piece should sit smartly in the notches.



Attach three quarter inch strips on the sides to support the seat



Glue a strip to the back as well



Finish off with screws for support

Hot Seat

Cut out a rectangle to make the seat, again remembering to comfortably accommodate the dimensions of the child's bottom. Cut the seat a little shallower than the sidepieces; it will look better if the seat is inset just a bit.

Now you need some ledgers to hold the seat in position. I have an idea! Use the $\frac{3}{4}$ " pieces left over from cutting out those notches! Pretty good thinking considering I still have my eyes closed!

The top of the seat should be set at a height of about 12", so measure up from the bottom of the sides up to 11- $\frac{1}{4}$ " (minus $\frac{3}{4}$ " for the thickness of the seat). Make a mark on both sides. Use a square against the back edge to make a line through the mark. This line locates the top edge of your ledger. Glue and screw the ledger pieces in place below the line.





Lay out all parts for assembly and apply glue to surfaces that touch



Pull all the pieces into position, clamp and screw the pieces together



Add screws

Next, set the back in place against the sides and mark a line across the back at the same height as the top edge of those 3/4" ledger pieces that are attached on either side. Then attach a 12" ledger below that line in the centre of the back to support the weight of the child in question.

Smear glue along all edges that contact each other and clamp the side and back pieces together. Install screws for support.



Sort the fabric into piles of related colours



Small swatches can be ordered from some quilting supply shops



Use acrylic artist's medium to attach the pieces of cloth



Brush on medium both under and over the cloth



Finished bench

Fab, oh!

Separate the fabric pieces into colour groups, sorting into lights and darks so you can graduate the tones and make it look like an airbrushed '60's Volkswagen. Or do it some other way that will actually look good. Apply the fabric pieces by brushing acrylic artist's medium onto the plywood, pressing the fabric down, and then brushing another coat over the top of the fabric. Trim the edges of the throne with long strips of fabric 3/4" wide. Once the whole thing is dry, you can apply more coats of acrylic artist's medium or water-based urethane to make the upholstery indestructible.



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Tip:

Small fabric swatches (1 ½" square) can be ordered in batches of 600 from [Keepsake Quilting](http://KeepsakeQuilting.com), Route 25B, Post Office Box 1618, Center Harbor, NH 03226-1618. 1-800-865-9458.



Detail of the top of the back



Detail of the seat and edge



Detail of the back



First child's bench



Resident chipmunk with his own chair

These thrones can be made to fit any bottom so don't hold back. Make one for yourself, too. And if you have a pet, for heaven sakes make one for him too or there will be an emotional outburst.



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