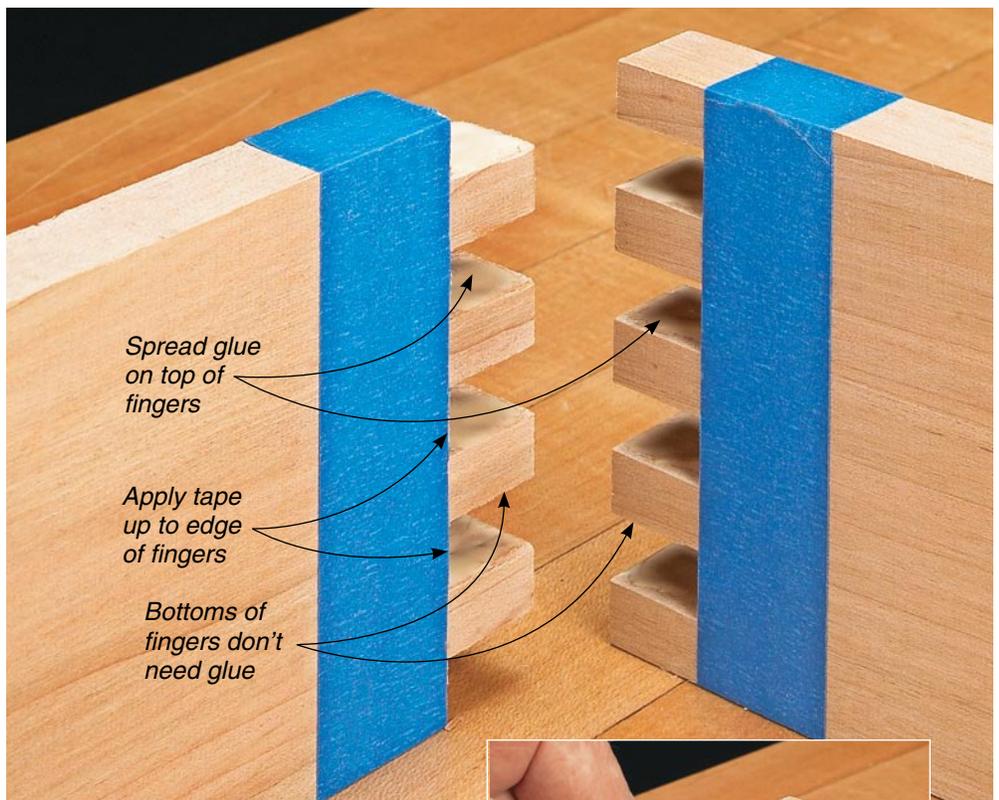


gluing Box Joints

Gluing up box joints can be a tedious job. But there are a few things you can do to make the task easier.

Dry Fit. The first is making sure the joint fits together well. Joints that are cut properly should come together smoothly. If there are gaps or the joint slides together too easily, then the glue won't hold. If it takes more than a few light taps with a mallet, the box joints are too tight with no room for glue.

Spreading Glue. The big advantage of box joints is the amount of gluing surface the interlocking fingers create. There are a lot of surfaces for the glue to "grab" to create a rock-solid joint.

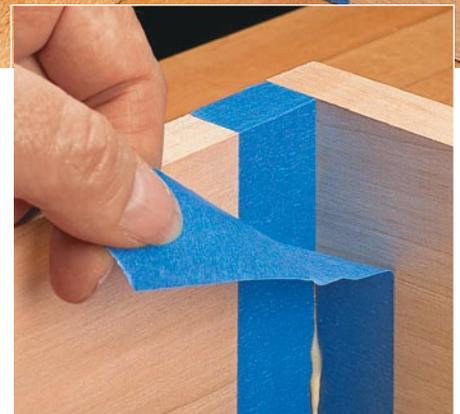


But, you really don't need to put glue on every surface. I like to use an artist's brush to spread glue on just the top of each finger (top photo).

Additional Tips. As you assemble the joint, glue spreads to exposed surfaces.

But there are a couple of ways to control it. You can place masking tape next to the pins before glueup. This shields the inside corners where it's tough to clean up any squeezeout. After the glue has skinned over, just pull off the tape, taking the excess glue with it (inset photo).

Also, lightly sanding the ends of the fingers with 220-grit sandpaper will help keep glue from seeping into the end grain where it's more difficult to remove. Another option is to cut the fingers slightly longer. This way, when you trim them flush, any excess glue is removed.



▲ **Glue Squeezeout.** Capture excess glue with painter's tape. It releases easy and doesn't leave a residue.

Clamping. The last step to success in gluing up a perfect box joint is clamping. If the fingers stand proud of the sides, you can't really apply clamps directly on the corners to pull the joints tight. But there is one thing you can do to make clamping the joints easier.

The answer is to use clamping blocks positioned alongside the joints. You can see what I mean in the left photo. This works especially well when using bar clamps for larger projects. (For small projects that don't require much pressure, you can wrap a band clamp around the whole assembly.)

Apply these simple steps to your next project that includes box joints. You're guaranteed to get better-looking and tighter-fitting joints. 🛠️



▲ **Clamping.** Position a set of blocks and clamps next to the fingers at each corner. This distributes pressure evenly and pulls the joints tight.