

Modern quilts and crafts by Marta Strzeszewski

# DIY IKEA Sewing Table Tutorial

October 26, 2012 [38 Comments](#)

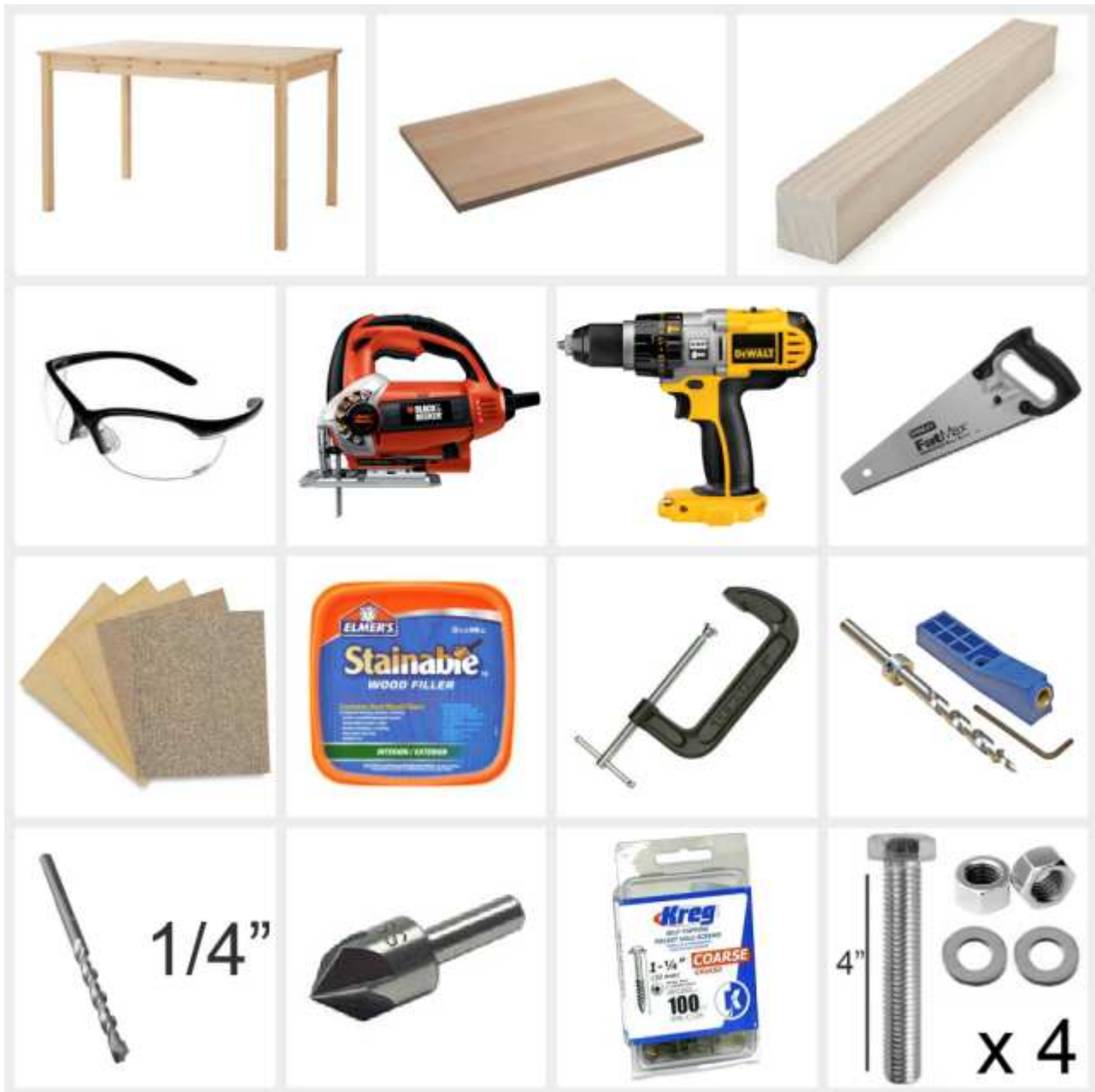
Today I'm pleased to share a DIY IKEA sewing table tutorial showing you how to make a custom sewing table from your INGO dining table. It's a lot easier than you think! If I can do it, you can do it.



Please read through the entire instructions before beginning this project so you get a good overview of what we'll be doing. It's sometimes easier to see photos of the later stages of the project in order to understand the earlier steps.

If you've just bought your INGO, make sure to fully assemble it before beginning this tutorial. Later in the project we'll be removing the tabletop but you need the table fully assembled to start. Just follow the always-easy-to-understand IKEA assembly instructions and let's begin!

## Supplies:



*Disclaimer: I don't endorse the brands pictured above and have no knowledge regarding any of their potential defects or safety issues. (Hey, I'm a product liability paralegal, okay?!)*

- Ikea INGO or other dining/kitchen table with a rail under the tabletop (this tutorial is not for Ikea tables where you pick a top piece and legs separately –you need that rail underneath in order to attach the support beams that will hold your machine).
- 1 board to use as a shelf on which your machine will sit under your table. Must be at least 2 inches longer and wider than your machine. I have a Janome MC 6600P and used a 12” wide, 21” long shelf left over from our new Ikea kitchen cabinets. I left it 12” wide and just cut it to the proper length.
- 1 wood 2×2. It needs to be at least twice the width of your table (if you’re using the same table as me you’ll need one that’s at least 52” long so you can cut it into two 26” long pieces).
- Safety goggles (DUH)
- Jigsaw
- Medium and fine grit sandpaper
- Wood filler
- Miter or hand saw (to cut your 2×2’s to size)
- Drill
  - 1/4” drill bit

- Countersink bit
- Mini Kreg Jig Kit
- C-clamp
- 4 1 ¼" wood screws
- 4 bolts (4" long, ¼" diameter) –it's best to use bolts that have threading at least halfway up the length of the bolt, since you'll be using these bolts to get your shelf to the correct height.
- 8 washers
- 8 nuts
- 4 bolt caps

## Construction

Place your sewing machine on top of the table and find a spot where you feel it's comfortable for you to sew. My machine is about 4.5" from the front edge and about 17" from the left edge.

Trace the outline of your machine onto your tabletop. If you'd like room for your cords to tuck underneath, make sure to account for that bit of extra space when you're tracing. If you have an acrylic extension table, make sure you trace around it as well if you want it to remain attached to your machine.

Carefully cut along your traced line with your jigsaw to create the hole in which your machine will fit. It helps to have someone holding the table still for you as you cut. Go slowly, especially around the corners. It takes some finesse to get nicely rounded corners (however, some sewing machines have square edges, in which case you'll be cutting a perfect rectangle). This was my first time using a jigsaw and my corners were far from perfect!



Now insert your machine to see if it fits snugly in the hole you just cut. Mine didn't fit right away so I had to sand the edges down a bit more and kept inserting my machine and sanding the edges until it fit (which, with a 25-pound machine, was quite a workout!). Don't worry if it doesn't fit on the first try –your tracing lines can be tough to get perfect so consider your initial hole to be a starting point (unless you are an expert tracer and jigsawer). :)

Once your hole is the right size and you've made sure your machine fits snugly, sand all the cut edges, first with a medium grit sandpaper to take care of the really rough parts and then with the fine grit to get it smooth and flat. The hole I cut splintered a bit in some areas. I removed the splinters and filled those spots in with wood filler, let it dry completely per package instructions, then sanded those areas smooth as well until I got a nice, flat surface with no splinters or gashes.



Next, flip your entire table over and measure the distance between the front and back rails. (If you're using the same INGO table as me, it should measure 26".) Cut your 2x2 into two pieces the same length as the distance between the rails and check their placement to make sure they fit snugly in between the rails.

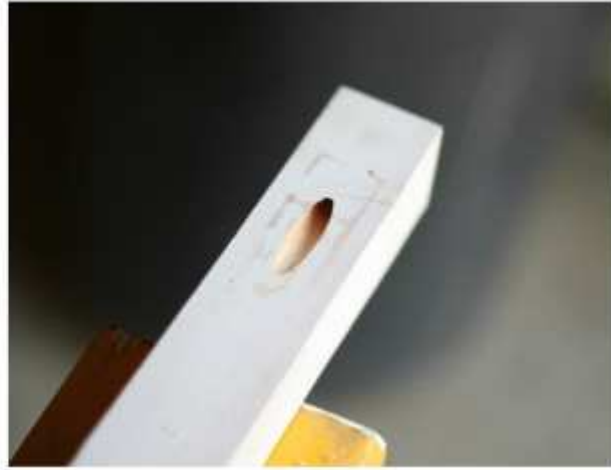


Now trace a line a couple of inches from each short side of your jigsawed hole (the line will be parallel to the short sides). You'll use these lines later as a guide to attach your 2×2's (which, by the way, are NOT 2 inches by 2 inches! I learned that "2×2's" are actually 1.5" x 1.5" –how confusing, right?!).



I didn't make any exact measurements here; I simply used the width of my level as my guide. The only real rule is that your line must be at least 2 inches from your hole in order to accommodate the width of the 2×2's (yes, the not-actually-2-inches-by-2-inches-2-by-2's).

Whip out your NIFTY [kreg jig kit](#), clamp it securely to your 2×2 (hint: use a paint stirrer on the underside so your clamp doesn't dig into the 2×2), attach the drill bit that comes with the kit and use it to drill pocket holes into **each** end of **both** of your 2×2's. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS that come with the kit to make sure you're clamping the kreg jig the proper distance from the edge. The length of the screws you use dictates the distance the kreg jig must be attached from the edge. Ours will need to accommodate 1 ¼" screws. You should now have 4 pocket holes!



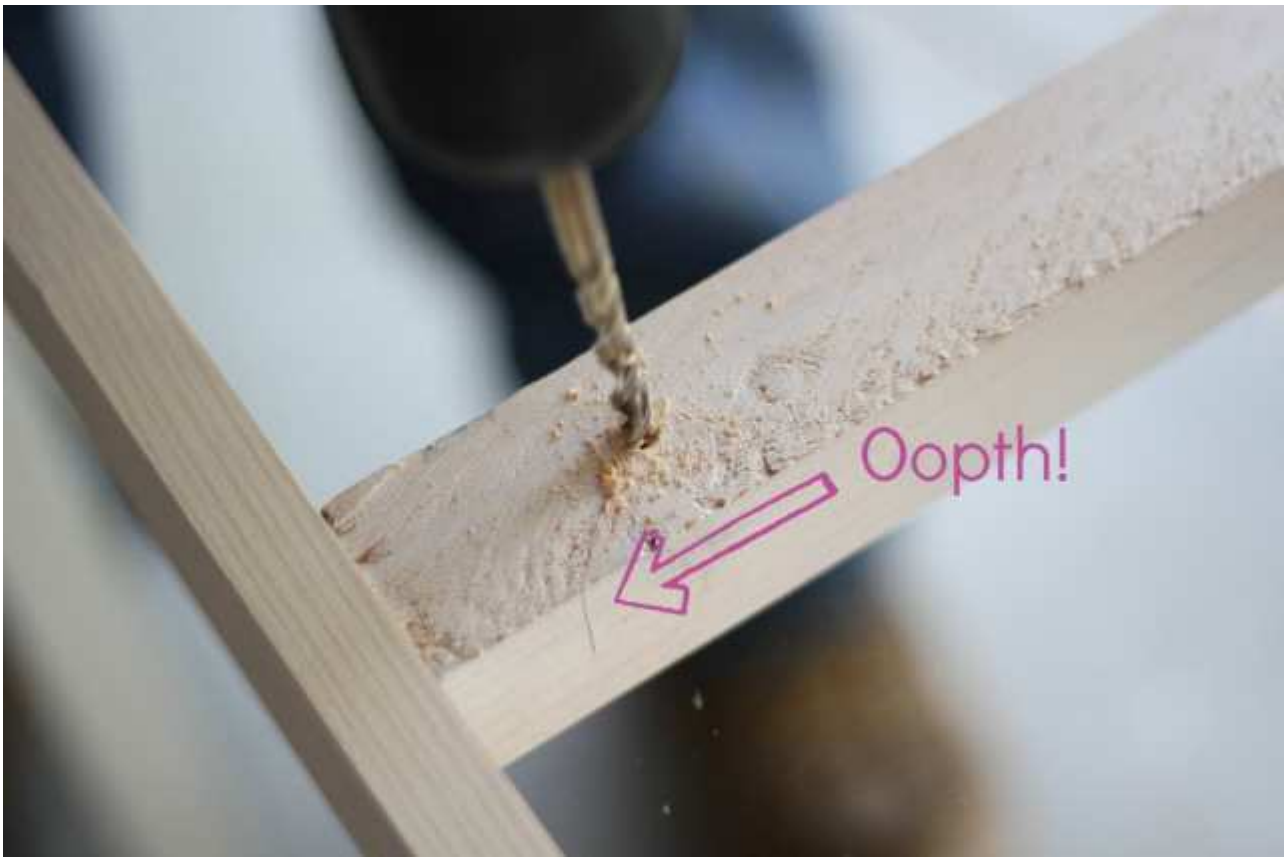
Next, line up the outer edge of your 2×2's with the lines you traced on the underside of your table and attach your 2×2's to the front and back table rails using the 1 ¼" wood screws through the pocket holes we just made. I must say, making and using pocket holes will make you feel LEGIT. Just a small step away from being Tim the Tool Man Taylor, really.



Once your 2×2's are attached, mark where the 4 bolts will go that will hold up the shelf with your sewing machine. **BE CAREFUL NOT TO MARK THEM TOO CLOSE TO THE FRONT EDGE OF YOUR TABLE, AS THAT'S WHERE YOUR POCKET HOLE SCREWS ARE.** I marked about 3 inches in front and behind my machine hole. (I apologize for the lack of photo for this part.)

Next, unscrew and remove JUST your tabletop from your table and set it aside. Everything else (the table legs, the rail around the perimeter, the 2×2's) should remain intact. You are JUST removing the table top so you can install your bolts, which will be countersunk into the 2×2's.

Attach your ¼" drill bit and drill 4 holes all the way through your 2×2's, at the spots you marked previously (you'll notice that the mark in my photo is NOT where I'm drilling the hole. That's because the first time I drilled at my mark, I hit the wood screw attaching my 2×2 to the rail! Hence the disclaimer above about making sure your marks aren't near your wood screws! Trial by fire, folks.).



Now attach your countersink bit and drill sink holes into the top of the 4 drilled holes you just made. The countersink bit only goes about 1/2" inch deep so that your bolts, when inserted, are flush with the top of your 2x2's but do not go all the way through. Test that your bolts fit by sliding them through the holes you just made and ensuring that their tops are nicely flush with the top of your 2x2's. You should be left with a flat surface on which to reattach your tabletop. Remove the bolts and set them aside for now.



Now turn your table base upside down, setting it on top of the shelf you'll be using to hold your machine (mine in the picture has NOT been cut to its proper length yet, which is why it looks too long).



Line up your shelf about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " past each 2×2 and use the 4 holes you just made in the 2×2's as a guide to begin drilling those same holes into your shelf (it helps to have someone holding your table and shelf steady as you do this). This will ensure that the holes in your 2×2's and the ones in your shelf line up perfectly for the bolts that will be holding them together. **DON'T DRILL ALL THE WAY THROUGH YOUR SHELF AT THIS POINT. RATHER, DRILL LITTLE PILOT HOLES, THEN REMOVE YOUR SHELF FROM UNDER THE TABLE AND PLACE IT ON A STURDY SURFACE TO FINISH DRILLING THOSE 4 HOLES ALL THE WAY THROUGH.** Put your shelf aside.

It's time to put the table back together!

## **Assembly**

First, place your bolts through the holes you made previously so that the top of the bolts are pointed up, and the threads are hanging underneath your table. Again, the tops of your bolts should be flush with the surface of the 2×2's, thanks to the countersink holes we drilled earlier.





Hold the bolts in place so they don't slip out, and carefully flip the table back over onto the tabletop. Reattach the tabletop to your [revamped!] base per IKEA's original assembly instructions.

Once you've reassembled your table and place it right side up, it should basically just look like a table with a hole in the top. It's only upon looking underneath that you'll be able to see your masterful carpentry :)

**Finally! Let's attach the shelf upon which your machine will live.**

Your bolts will now be hanging down underneath your table. Mount the shelf by assembling in the following order for each bolt:

NUT -> WASHER -> **SHELF** -> WASHER -> NUT



***EDITED TO ADD:*** you'll notice that my bolts in the picture are a bit too long. The ones I used on my table are actually 1/2" longer than the ones I recommend in my supplies list, so if you buy them per the supplies list you should be good to go. I might disassemble my table and replace mine with 4" bolts one of these days, but for now my too-long ones aren't proving to be a problem.



(For an ultra-stable shelf, we're securing nuts on each side of it rather than just underneath it. This adds some extra tension to keep your nuts from loosening from the shaking that occurs while you sew.)



Once you've installed the shelf by assembling the nuts and washers for all 4 holes in the order listed above, place your machine on your shelf and simply tighten or loosen the nuts until your machine is sitting at a height that is flush with the surface of your table top.



**Put bolt caps on the bottoms of your bolts, especially if you have kiddos!** You really want to protect your littles from hitting the bolts if they decide to play underneath your table. If you can't find caps the size of your bolts (I had a hard time), I would try sticking some cotton balls on the ends and covering them

with duct tape to provide some cushion and protection.

Now set aside your machine, pull your cords up through the hole, and place your machine back on the shelf.



cords, turn on your machine, and put the pedal to the metal! You're finished!

Plug in your



You'll notice I painted my table as well. [Here's the tutorial](#) I followed to a tee for the paint job.

Looks a lot nicer than those overpriced, plastic sewing tables, eh? It's cheaper, UBER chic, and you get the privilege of saying you made this custom sewing table with your own two hands! :) Win-win-win.

ENJOY, and be sure to leave me a comment here or e-mail me if you make this table yourself using my tutorial. I'd LOVE to hear your experience and see the finished product!

P.S. Please visit [Carrie's blog](#) and give her some LOVE. When I came home from buying my precious Janome with a picture of the shop's expensive custom tables fresh in my Droid, hers was the first tutorial I came across that gave me the confidence to say "You know what? I can do this, too!"

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#### Comments



1. [Melissa](#) says:  
[October 26, 2012 at 10:33 pm](#)

Umm...okay. Could I maybe just pay you and your mister to do this for me? You say it's easy, but I don't think you and I are speaking the same language, here. :)

It's GORGEOUS by the way. I'm super jealous. :)

[Reply](#)



2. [Amy](#) says:  
[October 26, 2012 at 11:21 pm](#)

Wowsers! AWESOME tutorial! Bravo my friend!! Now to just get my hubby to do this for me! :)

[Reply](#)



3. [Books\\_Bound](#) says:  
[October 26, 2012 at 11:24 pm](#)

Wowee! That looks so great. I don't really have room for this at the present time, but I think it's something I could totally tackle someday (provided someone loaned me some tools!) What an ambitious tutorial, and pulled off very well. :)

[Reply](#)



4. [Elizabeth](#) says:  
[October 27, 2012 at 10:20 am](#)

Great job Marta!!! I'm jealous!

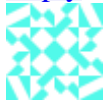
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5. [Flaun](#) says:  
[October 27, 2012 at 10:50 am](#)

I'm asking for a INGO for Christmas so I can make an awesome sewing table for myself. hanks so much for doing the legwork!

[Reply](#)



6. [Marit](#) says:  
[October 27, 2012 at 10:54 am](#)

After reading this very carefully, I must say it doesn't look too difficult. I think I will send my hub a link as a Christmas gift idea. Even easier if I don't have to do it myself:) Great tutorial!

[Reply](#)



7. [Patricia LoCascio](#) says:

[October 27, 2012 at 1:14 pm](#)

What a great tutorial! I read the whole thing and think I could actually do this! really good instructions, really clear. Good job, it's beautiful!

[Reply](#)



8. [mrsmel](#) says:

[October 28, 2012 at 7:16 am](#)

Or you could just order this one from Tony. I have it and it is so sturdy and nice.

<http://www.tonyssewingmachine.com/sewing-cabinets/>

Melody Johnson

[Reply](#)



o [Marta](#) says:

[October 29, 2012 at 9:07 am](#)

Thanks, Melody! But these expensive tables are the reason I wanted to show you how make one yourself for less than \$100. The \$600 from Tony's tables would be MUCH better spent on *fabric hoarding!* ;)

[Reply](#)



■ [Deb Myers](#) says:

[November 12, 2012 at 1:42 pm](#)

and.... marta, your IKEA/INGO table is soooo cute....so much more attractive than metal! great job!!



9. [Jenelle](#) says:

[October 28, 2012 at 1:32 pm](#)

This is so clever! If I had a place to do carpentry, I would totally give this a try. Custom sewing tables are so expensive and I love doing Ikea hacks. :)

[Reply](#)



10. [Catherine](#) says:

[October 28, 2012 at 3:08 pm](#)

That's brilliant! Did you submit it to <http://www.Ikeahackers.net?>

[Reply](#)



11. [Andrzej](#) says:

[October 29, 2012 at 12:55 pm](#)

Jakie to proste, dam mojej Tereni do zrobienia.Moja krew...Andrzej

[Reply](#)



12. [Barbara Cain](#) says:  
[October 29, 2012 at 5:21 pm](#)

Very nice of you to share this with us. I've been trying to decide for quite some time what to do with my machine. This just might be the ticket!!!

[Reply](#)



13. [nicke](#) says:  
[October 30, 2012 at 11:58 am](#)

i love it so much! you did a great job with this tutorial and if my husband hadn't already made me a table i would totally go this route! isn't it awesome having a handy husband! that can be taken two ways.... ;) xoxo

[Reply](#)



- o [Marta](#) says:  
[October 30, 2012 at 12:22 pm](#)

AHEM –Mike is GREAT and all, but this was 95% Marta! When I say “if I can do it, you can do it,” I ain't foolin', girl. Mike was out of town the week I decided to do this, and you KNOW I can't just sit around and wait for him. He came back when I was assembling the stuff underneath and helped by drilling a couple holes and posing for pictures. We don't need no stinkin' man! Okay, maybe we do, just not necessarily to build us a sewing table ;) ;) Love you to bits!

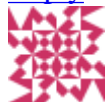
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14. [jojomatt](#) says:  
[October 30, 2012 at 4:54 pm](#)

Love it! I use an old butcher block kitchen table now and never thought of cutting out for the machine. I am tall so I like my machine higher than most. I IMMEDIATELY called my husband in to check it out. I just might get it done after all. Thank you for posting it.

[Reply](#)



15. [Jane](#) says:  
[October 30, 2012 at 8:58 pm](#)

Love this... been collecting ideas for my not-so-functional, clutter-haven sewing/craft room. Your tutorial is jumping right to the top of the list. Thanks so much for sharing.

[Reply](#)



16. [nancypantsy \(@nancypantsy\)](#) says:  
[October 31, 2012 at 6:49 am](#)



Hey, this looks great, and super for sewing flat things. I love the idea, and might ask my hubs to make it for me for a christmas gift! I am wondering what you do when you have to sew a leg hem or sleeve or shoulder? You know, what I mean? My machine sits atop a desk-type deal, and I pull off the the end of the machine so that I can slip a circular thing over it. I guess I could lift the machine up and onto the desk for that purpose.

[Reply](#)



○ *Marta* says:

[October 31, 2012 at 8:27 am](#)

Hey, Nancy!

Unfortunately the machine I have, whether on a sewing table or on a normal table, isn't great for clothing. This is one of the ONLY things, in fact, that I dislike about it (it's purely a quilting machine). I have a cheap Brother with an open arm that I use for top-stitching bags and hemming sleeves and such, so I don't ever take my Janome out of the table to do sleeves.

If your machine does have an open arm, though, I would do as you mentioned and set it on the flat part of your table just while you're using that open arm.

Let me know if you have any other questions –I'm happy to help! Have a lovely week :)

[Reply](#)



▪ *nancypantsy (@nancypantsy)* says:

[November 1, 2012 at 9:17 am](#)

Hey, thanks for the info! I don't quilt, but mostly make accessories, home dec, some clothing, costumes, things like that...not to mention repairing my son's torn favorite (every one of them!) clothing items. Anyways, the flat table would be really nice for larger home dec projects, but because I do use that removable arm a lot, I think the lower-mount isn't for me.

It's a wonderful looking table, and there's nothing better than putting your effort into something and it turns out to be great and super-useful!!



17. *thesewingchick* says:

[November 1, 2012 at 7:07 pm](#)

Hey Marta – This is awesome. I may even be able to handle it myself. (never used a jigsaw!!). I even have a table already that I could use.

btw – I saw that you are going to Sew South. Me too! I have enjoyed your blog for a while, it will be so fun to meet you for real!!

[Reply](#)



18. *Krista* says:

[November 2, 2012 at 12:46 pm](#)

This is an amazing tutorial lady! I am very impressed :)

[Reply](#)



19. [Deb](#) says:  
[November 3, 2012 at 11:03 am](#)

I am so excited to have my handyman friend try this... wow – thanks so much!

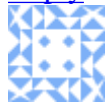
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20. [lisa m](#) says:  
[November 3, 2012 at 6:25 pm](#)

Well done and great tutorial! For nice rounded corners, I like to drill a hole in each corner of the space I'm cutting out...and that way you don't have to turn your jigsaw. And all lumber is sized by how big they cut it before they run it through the machine which finishes the surfaces nice and smooth—kinda like quilt blocks :-)

[Reply](#)



21. [Betty Crenshaw](#) says:  
[November 4, 2012 at 2:12 am](#)

LOVE this tutorial. Thank you!! I notice you have a top loading bobbin on your machine. Do you think this set up would work with a front (underneath) bobbin? Might it be too difficult to get at the bobbin once the machine is in place?

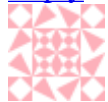
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22. [happierthanabirdquilts](#) says:  
[November 4, 2012 at 5:46 am](#)

This is so awesome! Thank you! When I upgraded my machine it no longer fit in my sewing table so I'm on top of a sad little folding table, and even with that plexiglass "table" quilting is a pain in the butt. I think I'll be asking my hubby to make this for my birthday!

[Reply](#)



23. [Marlene](#) says:  
[November 4, 2012 at 7:27 am](#)

My sister posted this on her FB page! So glad she did! This is awesome! Wish I had more space so I could have one! Don't think hubby would appreciate me cutting a hole in the diningroom table! :) One suggestion – if you have a dremel, you could cut off the ends of the screws once you are finished aligning the machine. Then you don't have anything except the bolts to worry about with the 'little's! Why is it that is always their fav place to play? Mine were ALWAYS under the table when I was sewing!

[Reply](#)



24. [Gertie Pye](#) says:  
[November 4, 2012 at 4:34 pm](#)

This is such a fantastic tutorial! I am hoping to buy a new machine soon, hopefully with a view to doing some FMQ'ing, but really I need a table that my machine can sit in to FMQ, but I can't afford the machine AND the table! However this looks quite affordable. And I'm sure I can convince my other half to have a go at this (especially when he sees how much Horn tables cost!)

[Reply](#)



25. [Valerie](#) says:

[November 4, 2012 at 6:13 pm](#)

This is so great! I have mentioned doing this to my hubby before, and this tutorial is so well written. Bookmarking now -thank you!

[Reply](#)



26. [Shift Ctrl Art](#) says:

[November 7, 2012 at 6:18 pm](#)

What a great table!! Love it!!

[Reply](#)



27. [Tracy](#) says:

[November 7, 2012 at 8:30 pm](#)

I have been wanting to do something similar but my Pfaff has the bobbin that is underneath the needle plate. One day I will figure out how to put a latch or swing arm on the table so I can get at my bobbin. I quilt, so I need to get to it often.

[Reply](#)

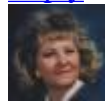


28. [doug](#) says:

[November 8, 2012 at 5:16 am](#)

There is one last finishing touch you need to make this build totally awesome. Countersink the holes in the sewing machine support board to hide the nuts at the end of the bolts. Use a countersink wide enough so that both the nut and washer fit. Cut the bolt to size or buy a slightly shorter bolt so that nothing projects below the support board. Your knees will thank you.

[Reply](#)



29. [Wendy Somerville](#) says:

[November 26, 2012 at 10:11 am](#)

Marta this is a fabulous Tutorial and I am already purchasing the necessary supplies. ie Table from Ikea etc. Our Ikea store is just opening here on Wednesday. ;-)) Yeah!! However, I have a Babylock Quilters Dream Machine and it too, as others have mentioned, has the bobbin underneath. Any idea how I could make a trap door to reach it? Please let me know if you have any ideas on this.

My on/off button will also be below the table top so I will have to make some adjustments there as well.

Thank you so much for the impressive tutorial. ;-)

[Reply](#)



- [Wendy Somerville](#) says:  
[December 9, 2012 at 8:18 pm](#)

I have come up with a design for this table for machines that have a front loading bobbin like my BabyLock. I also have an acrylic quilting table which will be incorporated into the top. I will let Marta know and send her pics to post when it is finished. ;-)

[Reply](#)



- 30. [Chelsea Rogers](#) says:  
[November 28, 2012 at 2:51 pm](#)

This makes me want a new sewing machine – one with a top load bobbin. I have an old drop in table that I got from my mother in law's estate, and I have to haul the machine out ever time I change the bobbin. Such a pita.

[Reply](#)



- 31. [Jody](#) says:  
[December 9, 2012 at 5:35 pm](#)

This will work as long as you have a drop in from the top bobbin style machine or you will need to lift it out to access the bobbin case from underneath. I notched my table in the front for my bobbin access.

[Reply](#)

## Trackbacks

- 1. [Joel Dewberry Heirloom Table Runner - from Marta with Love](#) says:  
[November 6, 2012 at 3:32 am](#)

[...] closely at my table runner you can see a section of Amy's quilting from when she took my new IKEA sewing table for a test drive. That woman can stipple! Now, not only do I have an awesome table runner in my [...]

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