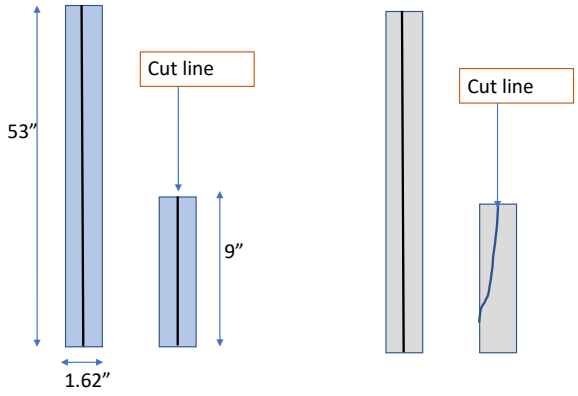
Bevel Cut 2018-06 June

I Saw; We Saw; We All Want to Resaw by Andrew Davis

Shortly after recognizing my woodworking passion, I bought a small band saw on craigslist. About a year or three later I upgraded to a brand new, 14-inch Rikon device. I wanted better performance, but mostly I had dreams of resawing boards for a variety of purposes – making more efficient use of lumber, creating thin boards for a variety of purposes, and because bookmatching was so cool.

I recently had a misfortune with my first serious resaw attempt. I was at the workshop of a fellow guild member (who shall not be named) and we tried a cut without going through the proper check list. I had a very nice piece of white oak, roughly 54 x 9 x 1.625. Beautiful wood, and I was too timid to try a resaw on my own. My diagram below shows my intended cut, and the result I actually got. Not exactly a proud moment. The only saving grace is that one half of the board could be salvaged by multiple passes through my planer.



Bottom line: as would be the case for using a table saw, miter saw, jig saw, or even a drill press, setup with a bandsaw is important, and for the resaw operation I would say it is CRUCIAL.

a. Install a resaw blade- the wider the better; 3 tpi is recommended. Some blades available in retail shops are described as “resaw blades” to make your decision easier.
b. Tune up the machine: set the blade to 90 degrees to the table, adjust the blade guides. Set tension so that the blade deflects ¼ inch or less.
c. Make sure the blade tracks true (this is where scrap comes in handy)
d. Think about a resaw fence. Some recommend a fence that is at least half as high as the board will be. Some fences can adjust for drift angle; some cannot. There are online tips for making your own fence for resawing; there are some who recommend not using a flat fence but instead a fence with a round protrusion in the middle so that you can adjust the angle of the wood as you are cutting in order to keep the blade in the right track.
e. Then turn your attention to the wood – one side should be jointed and one edge needs to be at 90 degrees to the jointed surface. This allows the board to sit flat on the table and plumb to the fence.
f. Test with scrap that is about the same size as the board to be sawn. Saw slowly. If satisfied, move on to the real task and pray.

I know this is a common situation in woodworking (and other projects like painting); the key is in the setup. Saving time by rushing through the preparation steps inevitably leads to wasting time, not saving time. And in the woodworking case, it leads to wasted or lost material. The goal is simple: keep the blade from wandering and the result being a miscut board where one portion is thinner than desired. An online warning: With the right fence set up and good sawing technique, it's still very possible to have miscut pieces; a really dense wood can fight with a resaw blade. Or the tension of your blade can loosen as you work. Or an abnormality in the work piece can cause the cut to go off course. And so it goes.

Mea culpa. I'm going to give this another try on my bandsaw – probably with a 2x8 from HD for starters before I even think about resawing my precious hardwoods. I just bought a resaw blade. If I can't get that to work, I'll be asking a guild member to show me the way to resaw heaven.

Another alternative is to give up and to stick with boards six inches or less in width: Then resaw by using two passes on my ever-reliable table saw.