



A Modern Bandsaw Reindeer



by farbulouscreations

In this Instructable, I'll show you how I designed a modern, new take on the noble Bandsaw Reindeer. There's a template that's been floating around the internet for years, but it's never quite looked like a reindeer to me, hence my desire to create this new template.

The bandsaw reindeer is a simple project that can be completed in as little as 30 minutes if you want a more rustic look to your reindeer, but a little longer if you want a more finished look.

If you'd rather watch a build video before jumping into the Instructable, be sure to watch the full video above. If you like it, please consider [subscribing to my YouTube channel](#) so I know this is the type of project people enjoy learning how to make themselves so that I can make more projects and videos like it in the future!

Supplies:

- A block of wood measuring approximately 10.75" x 5.25" x 1.5"
- My printed template, linked below.
- Sandpaper (optional)
- Polyurethane (optional)

<https://youtu.be/Cy7w-YpsRJj>

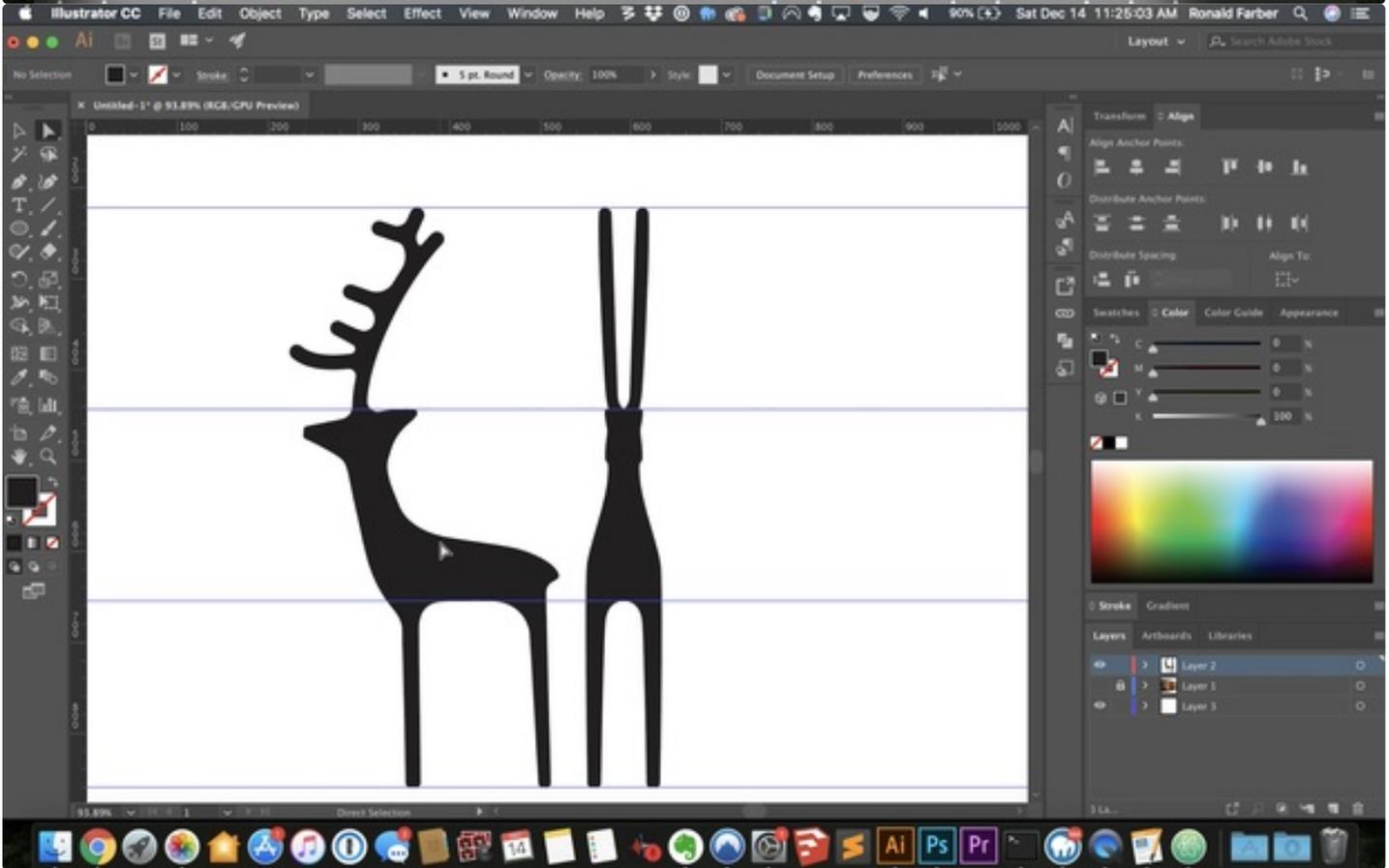
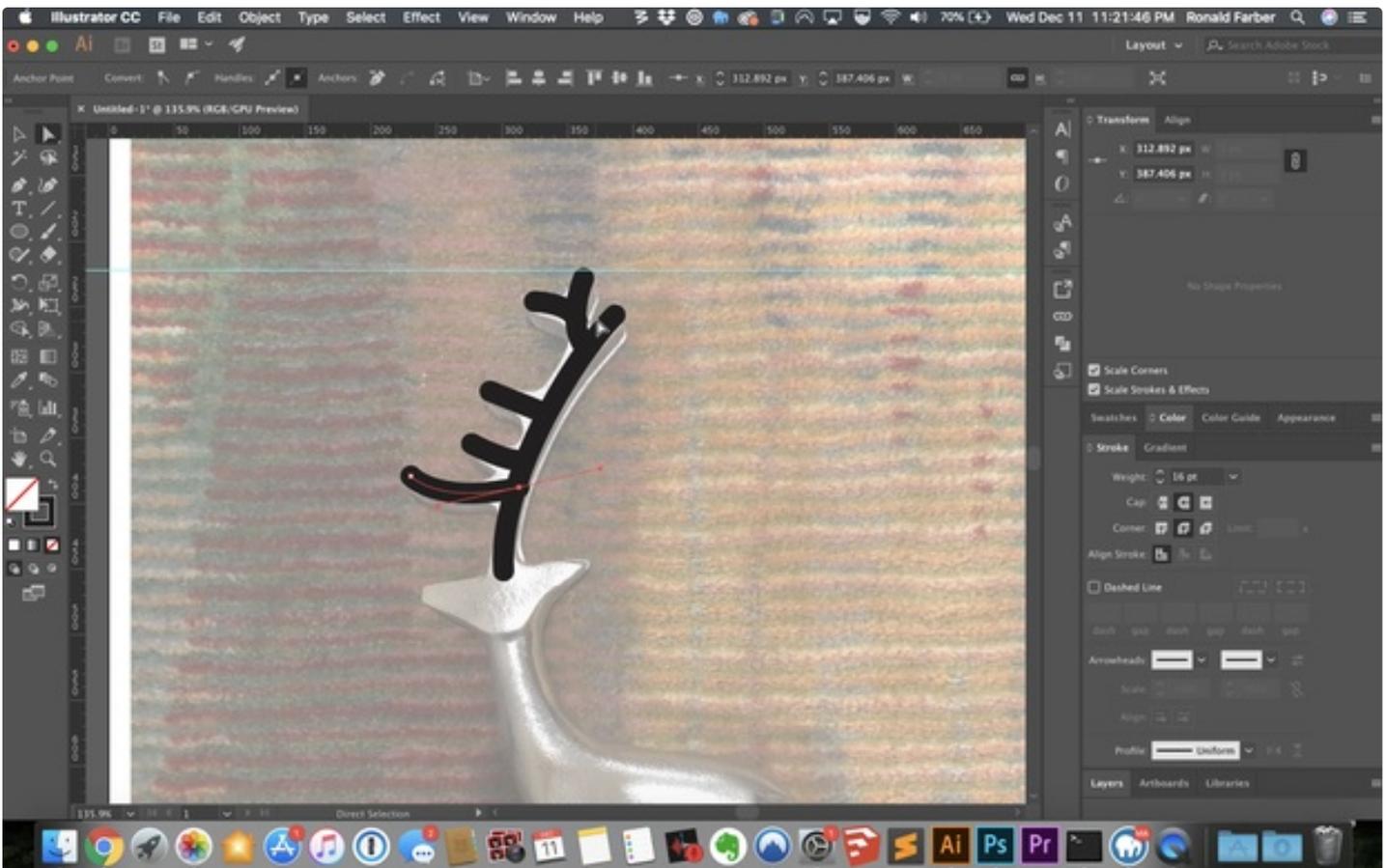
Step 1: Design Template

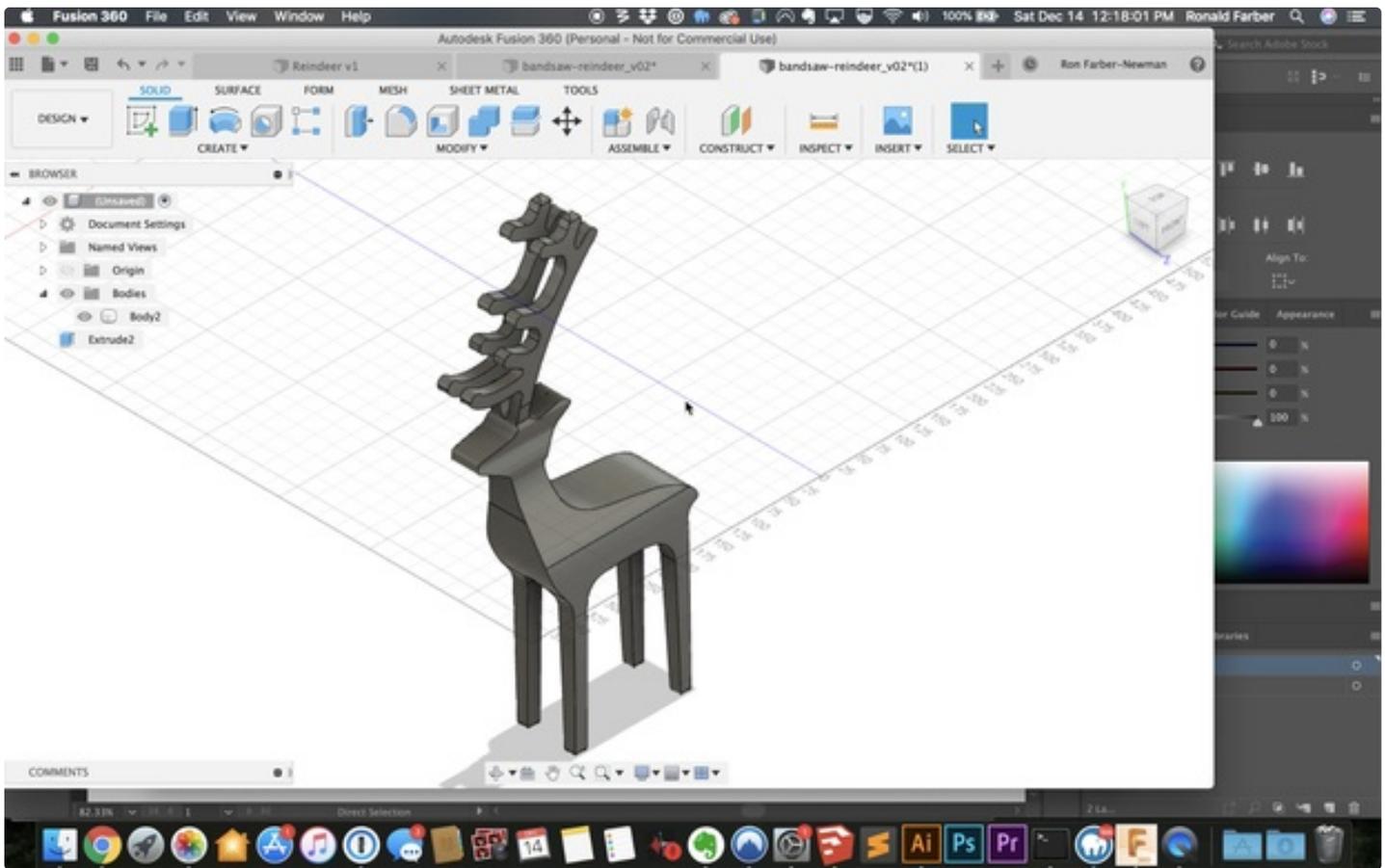
If you're interested to learn how the template was developed, read on, but if you simply want to download my template, you can find it linked in [my build video's description on YouTube](#).

This design was inspired by a zinc reindeer sculpture sold by Create & Barrel. A few friends of mine own one and had it on their mantle and I loved the look and thought I could potentially make one out of wood.

So I asked if I could snap a few photos of its front and side profiles, which I then used to design my template using Adobe Illustrator.

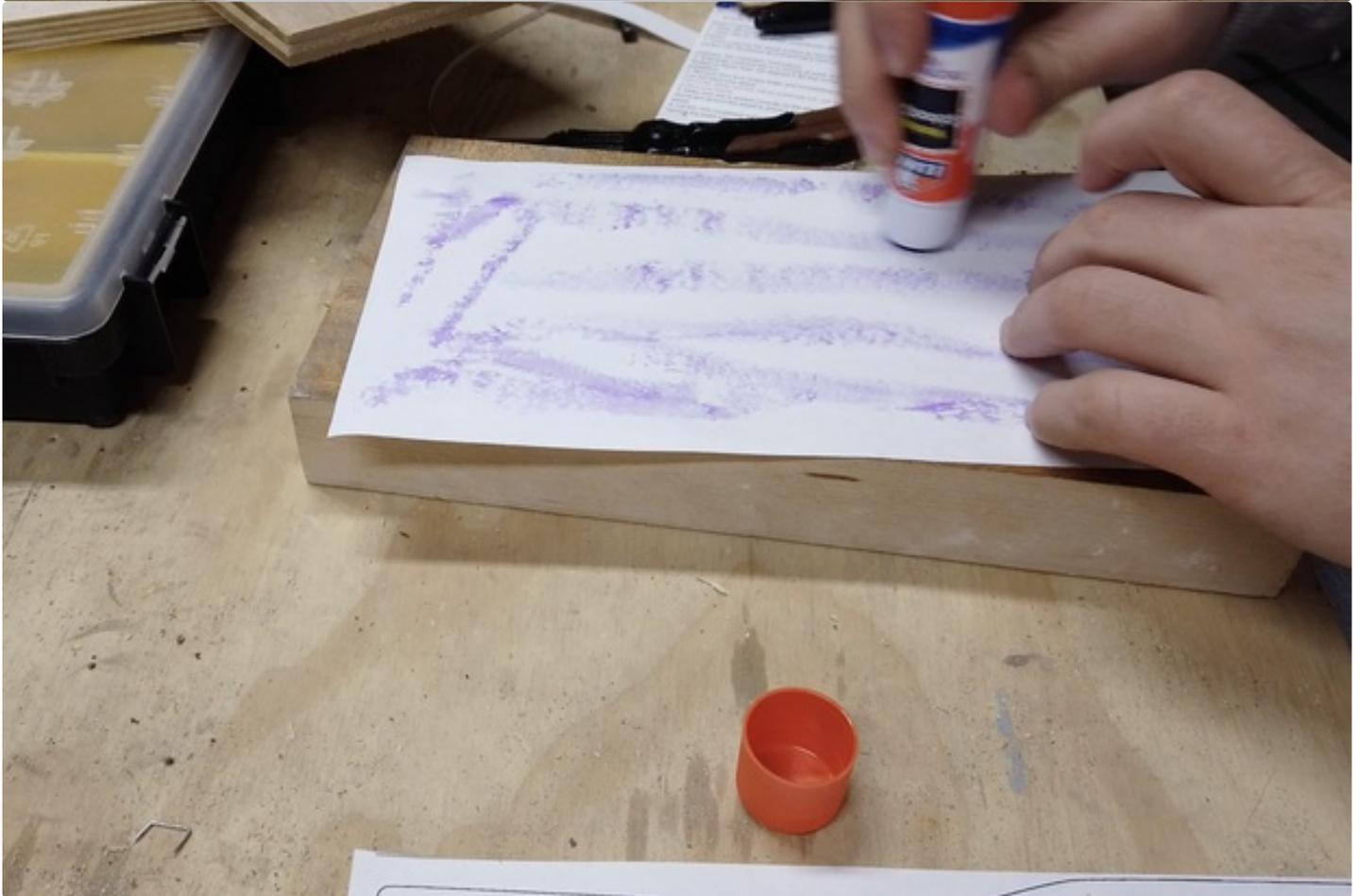
After designing the template, I confirmed that the template would yield a viable shape on the bandsaw once cut by bringing the vector paths into Autodesk Fusion 360 and extruding each shape and performing a boolean operation to reveal only the areas where the two extrusions overlapped.





Step 2: Apply Template to Wood Blank

Print out the template above, then cut out each part of the template using scissors or a utility knife. Using a glue stick or other adhesive of your choice, apply the template to one of the narrow sides and one of the wide sides of your 10.75" x 5.25" x 1.5" wood blank.



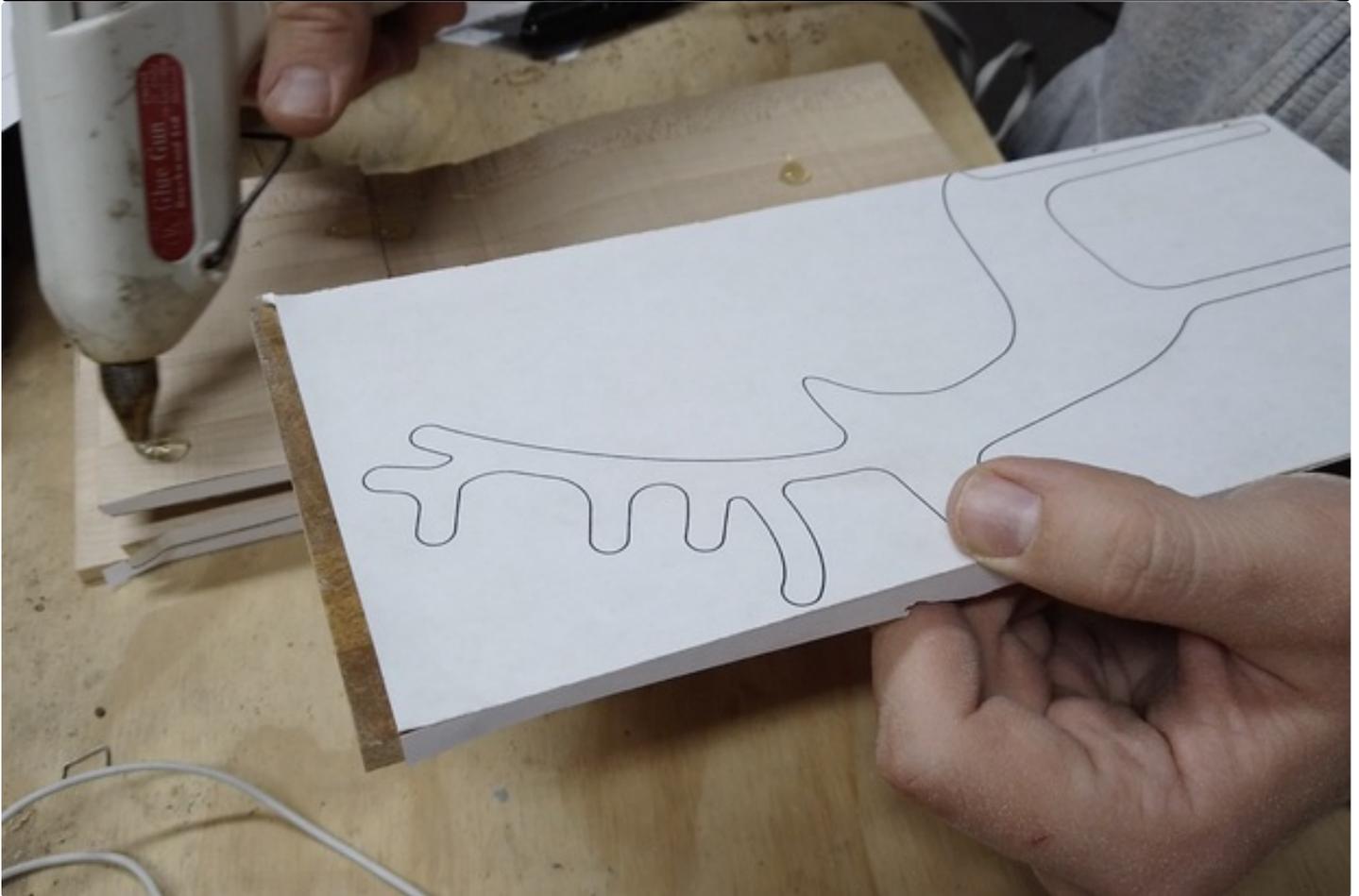
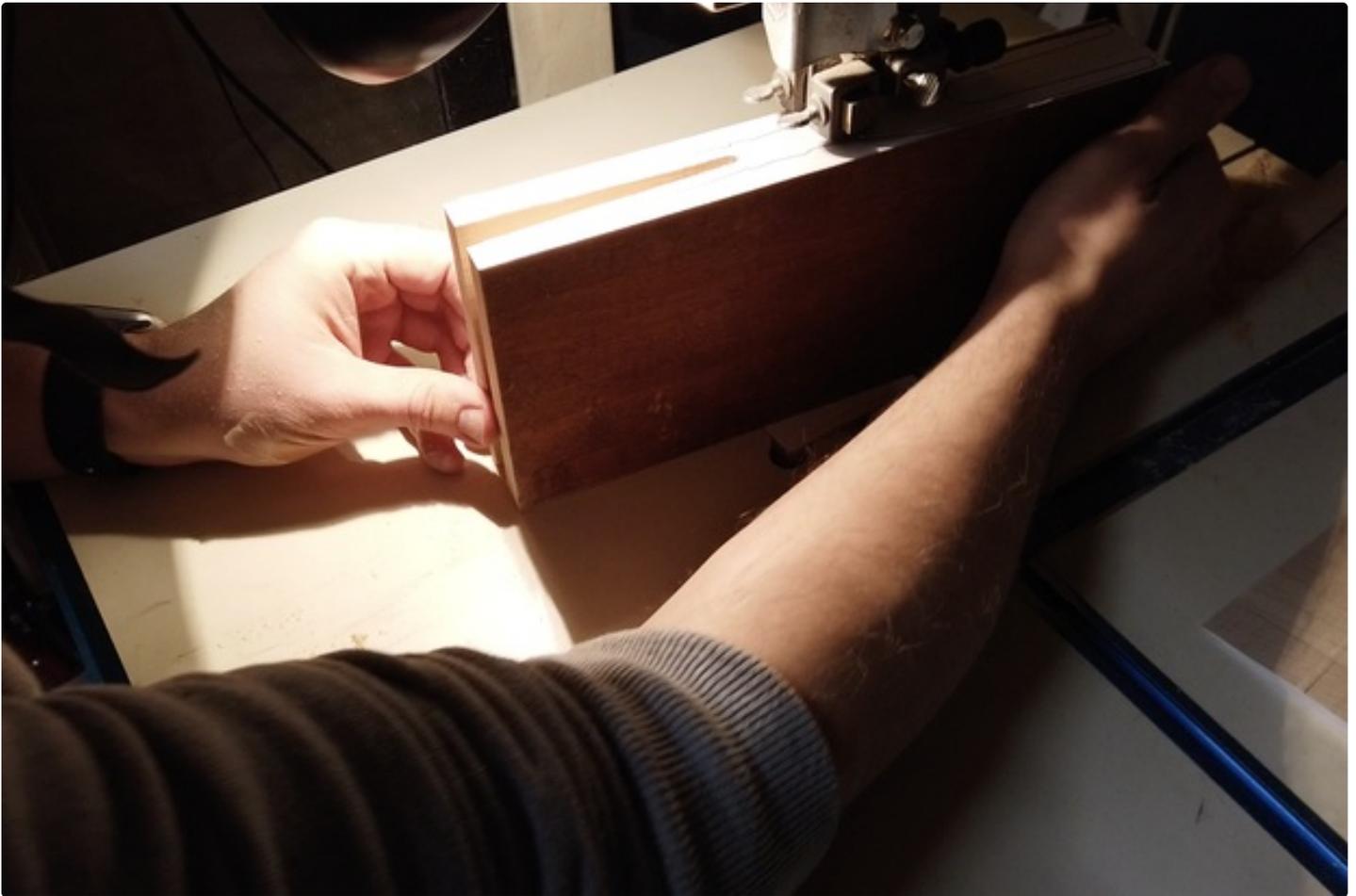


Step 3: Cut Front Profile

Using a bandsaw with a 3/8" blade, cut the front face of the reindeer block first. Carefully follow the line all around the reindeer, making sure not to take any corners too sharply while cutting. If a turn radius is less than 1/4 of an inch, either do a series of relief cuts to make room for the blade to turn, or back out of the cut and come at it from a different side of the block.

Once cut off, be sure to reserve the two side pieces that get cut off – they will eventually be scrap, but we need to glue the cutoff pieces back on temporarily using hot glue to provide a flat face to use on the bandsaw table while cutting the other face of our template.

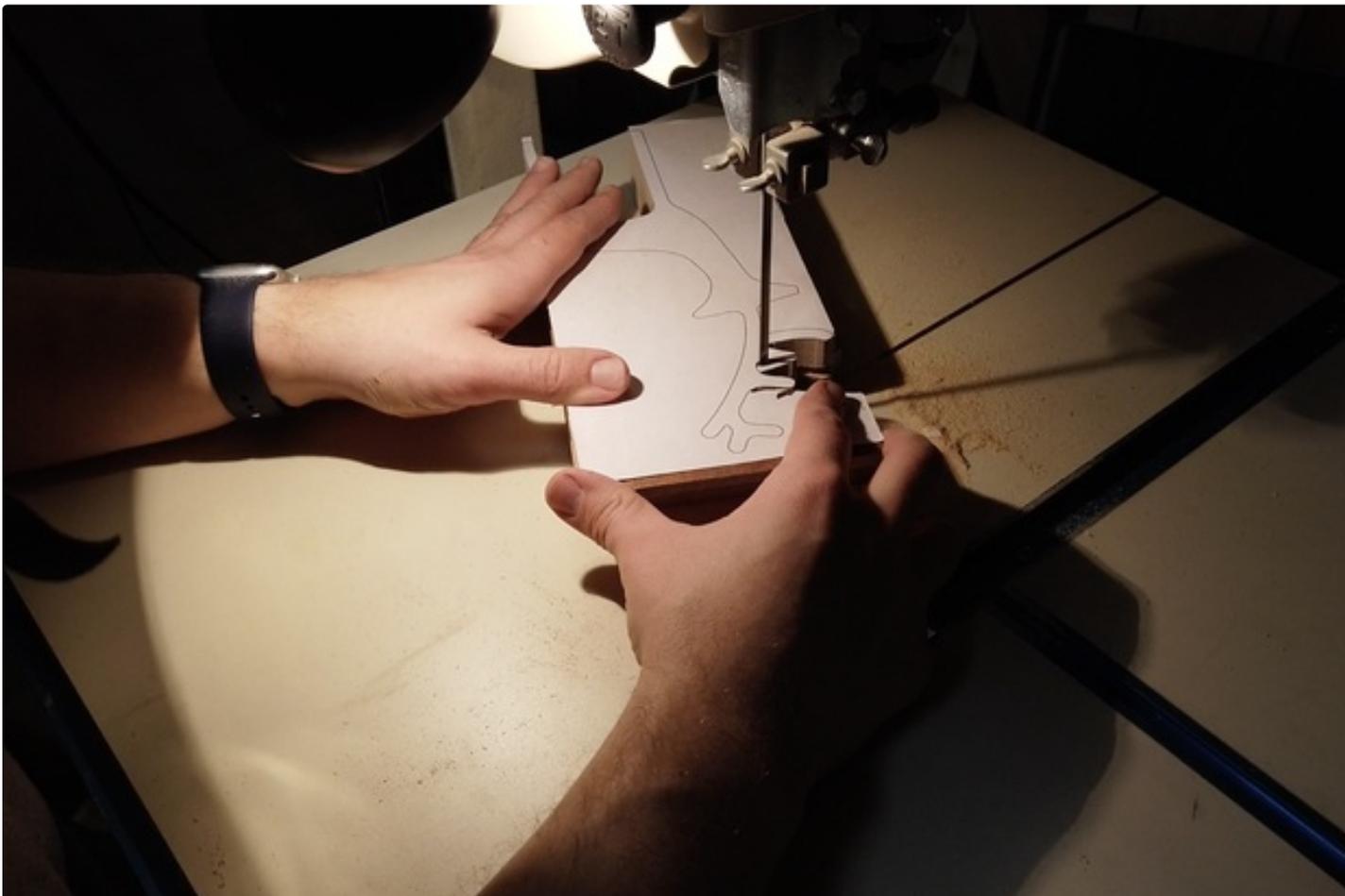
So with a hot glue gun, glue the cutoff pieces back in place, trying to place the glue in the areas outside the lines of the face we haven't cut yet.

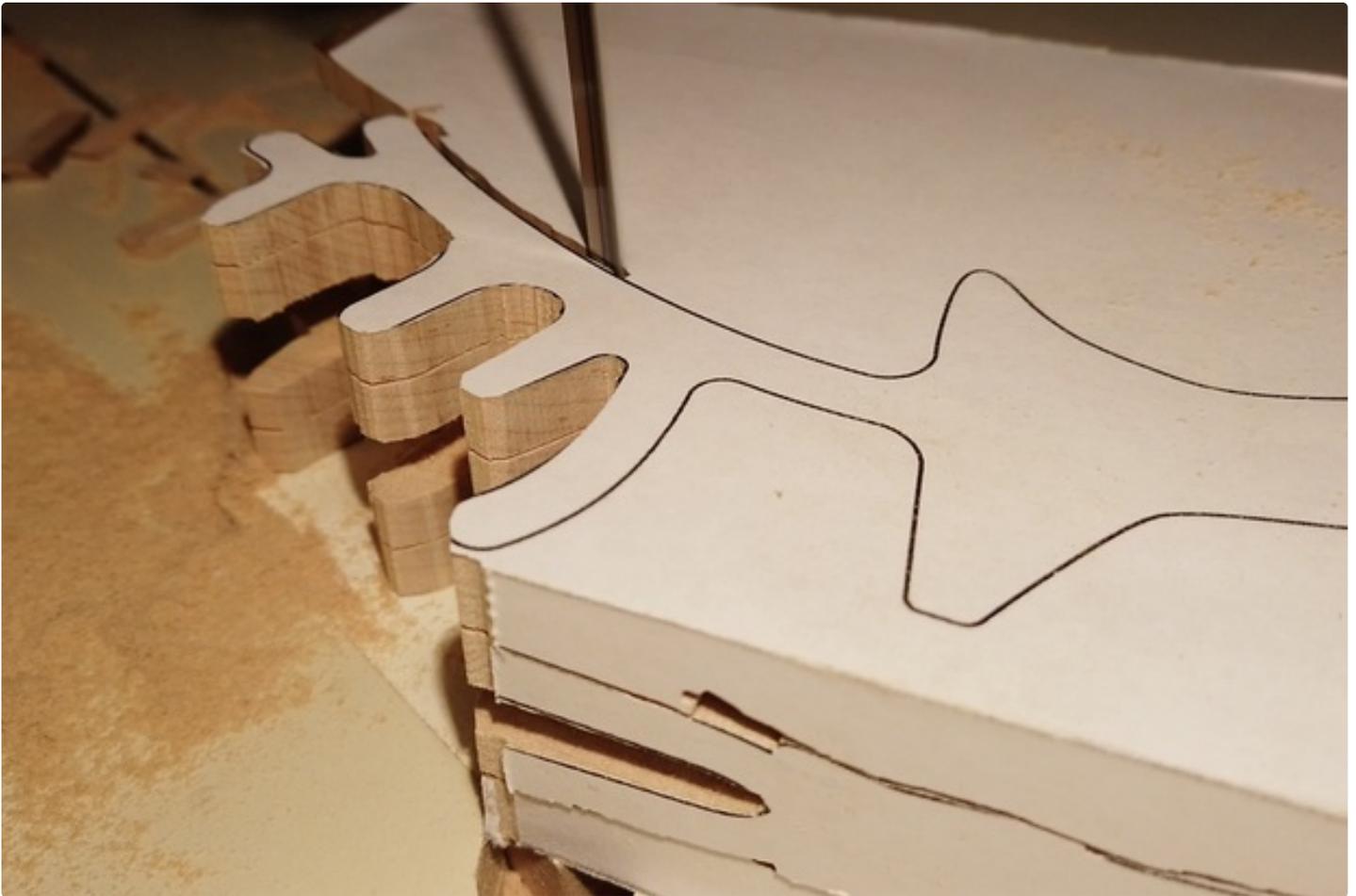


Step 4: Cut Side Profile

After the front-profile cutoff pieces are glued back on, we can cut the other profile.

This dimension will be easier to cut, as the blade is going through a lot less wood, giving you the ability to move a little faster and turn a little easier. Again, hug your line as smoothly and cleanly as possible, and any areas that are too tight to turn cleanly – such as inside the antlers – make “relief cuts” to make room for the blade to change directions, or come at it from a different direction.





Step 5: Reveal Your Reindeer Hidden Within

Once the side profile is cut out, the pieces that you glued back on should now release cleanly from each side to show your reindeer in all its glory. If parts of it are stuck, your hot glue might have ended up where it shouldn't have, and you'll need to use a utility knife to carefully pry the scrap off of your reindeer.





Step 6: Sanding

Now it's time to sand, sand, sand – but only if you really want to. You definitely don't need to focus on making these perfectly smooth. Leaving a trace of the bandsaw lines behind to make them more rustic is certainly acceptable – just depends on the aesthetic you're going for.

I chose to sand mine perfectly smooth, however, to remove all traces of the bandsaw blade. I realized it was going to involve a lot of hand sanding if I wanted these super smooth, as a Dremel is a little too rough for the job.

If you also want to make your reindeer super smooth, do as I did and progress through the sanding grits, going as low as 60 grit to clean up all the bandsaw lines, then progressing up to 400 to get a super smooth finish.

Getting into some of the areas, such as between the legs will be too difficult by hand, so you can wrap your sandpaper around a dowel to create a make-shift manual spindle-sander.

I also glued a piece of sandpaper to a thin strip of wood, making what was effectively an emory board or nail file, to really fine tune areas that were too tight to get in by hand, such as around the antlers.



Step 7: Finishing

Once they are all sanded and smooth to your liking, use an air compressor (if you've got one) or canned air to blow away the fine dust. A bit of mineral spirits on a rag will also accomplish the task at hand.

After that, select a finish to apply to your reindeer, keeping in mind that a spray-on finish will be far easier than a paint-on or wipe-on option.

I decided to use Varathane spray-on oil-based polyurethane in Satin finish to give the reindeer a rich, warm look, which I figured goes well with the holidays.

Began each coat by holding the reindeer in a gloved hand and lightly spray finish on his belly and antlers – both areas that are a little hard to reach when he is standing on his own four feet. After that, set it down on a scrap piece of plywood and make light passes as you slowly rotate the scrap wood around to reach all sides of the reindeer.

If you have some drips after any of your coats from applying the finish a little too heavily like I do from time to time – lighter coats are always better, but I get a little spray happy from time to time – don't fret. After a coat has properly dried (read the can), you can perform a good hand-sanding with 220 grit sandpaper, making sure to level out any drips from the polyurethane.

After sanding between coats, dust it off with air, then apply one final light coat. All in all, I applied 4 coats to my reindeer.





Step 8: Decorate Your Hearth

You are now the proud owner of a chic, handcrafted Christmas decoration that you made! So set it on display on your mantle, coffee table, or other place you want to feel especially Christmassy!

I hope you liked this writeup! And I do have to say, even though I poked fun at the look of the classic bandsaw reindeer in the intro, it did inspire this project, so I appreciate it nonetheless.

If you liked this project, please consider [subscribing to my YouTube channel](#) so that you don't miss future projects from me!

Finally, I would greatly appreciate your vote in the **Holiday Decorations Speed Challenge!** You can place your vote for this project below! Thanks for your consideration!



Thanks to Ron for the original pattern. I also did a version with the head turned.



I liked these reindeer so much that I asked my dad to help me make some. We made one out of pine for my mom and one out of mahogany for me. Then we decided to make a doe and fawn (without antlers). These were made from cherry. For the doe, we tilted the head down a little. For

the fawn, we tilted the head up a little. Not bad, I think, for my first time using a bandsaw!
We are making another doe and fawn out of pine for my mom because she liked them so much.
Thank you for the instructions! These are just so cute!



Now I made some sleighs to match!



Adorable!! I'll have to make something like this too!! Beautiful!



Oh my goodness! They turned out great!! Thank you so much for sharing – I've been looking forward to seeing other people using the template to make reindeer of their own and you're the first I've seen make their own too! Great job!!!



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Very creative and beautiful. Good Job!!



Thank you so much! Glad you like it!



Thank you for the kind words! Glad you like it!



Very, very nice! Thanks for sharing the template!



Absolutely! If you make one and post a photo on social be sure to tag me! I'm @fabulouscreations in most places such as Instagram! I'd love to see it!



I made one of these 35 years ago and sent it to my girlfriend in Japan. Now my girlfriend's my wife. We've been very happy together.





That's a beautiful story! Congratulations on 35 years together!



Love this, it reminds me of a middle school shop class project I did. Only yours looks 100 times better



Hard to make that into an ash tray. Showing my age again. :-)



Haha, this would be a good shop project! It really only takes 15 minutes or so if you don't want it perfectly smooth and neat – i.e. perfect for the attention span of high schoolers! Thank you for the kind words!



Very Nice...



Thank you! :)



This is really cute and it's neat how you were able to create the model on Fusion to see if it would cut out well :)



Thanks Penelopy! Glad you like it! I really need to learn more Fusion!