GENERAL

how to make a lazy susan

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How to Make a Lazy Susan: A Step by Step DIY Guide

Lazy Susans are the unsung heroes of many kitchens, dining rooms, and even office spaces. They make reaching for spices, condiments, or office supplies a breeze, and they add a touch of functional elegance to any table. If you've ever wondered **how to make a lazy susan**from scratch, you've come to the right place. This guide will walk you through the entire process— from selecting materials to finishing touches—so you can create a custom, sturdy, and stylish rotating tray that fits perfectly in your home.

Why Build Your Own Lazy Susan?

While store bought options are convenient, a DIY Lazy Susan offers several advantages:

- Customization: Choose the size, shape, and finish to match your décor.
- Cost effective: Reuse scrap wood or repurpose old materials.
- Crafting satisfaction: Nothing beats the pride of a handmade kitchen accessory.
- Eco friendly: Reduce waste by using reclaimed wood or recycled materials.

With a little patience and the right tools, you can create a Lazy Susan that lasts for years.

Materials You'll Need

Below is a comprehensive list of items you'll require. Feel free to adjust quantities or substitute similar materials based on your project's scale.

- Wooden board (preferably hardwood such as maple, cherry, or oak) – 1.5–2 inches thick
- Wood glue (PVA or a high strength wood adhesive)
- Sandpaper (120, 220, and 320 grit)
- Wood finish (varnish, polyurethane, or oil)
- Wood screws or nails (if you're attaching the bearing to the base)
- Lazy Susan bearing (ball bearing or roller bearing, 4–6 inches in diameter)
- Wooden dowels or rods for the central support (optional)
- Clamps (to hold parts together while glue dries)
- Drill and drill bits (for pilot holes and mounting)
- Chisel (for carving or trimming)
- Measuring tape or ruler
- Pencil or marking tool

Tools You'll Need

Having the right tools will make the process smoother and safer.

- Table saw or circular saw
- Jigsaw (for cutting curves, if desired)
- Orbital sander or sanding block
- Drill with screwdriver and drill bits

- Clamps (bar clamps or C clamps)
- Square or combination square
- Safety gear: goggles, ear protection, and dust mask

Step 1: Planning Your Lazy Susan Design

Choose the Shape and Size

Before you cut any wood, decide on the dimensions. A typical Lazy Susan is 12–18 inches in diameter, but you can go smaller for a spice rack or larger for a full dining table. The thickness of the board should be at least 1.5 inches for durability.

Decide on the Number of Levels

Do you want a single level tray, or a multi tiered design? Multi tiered Lazy Susans add extra storage but require more precise alignment to ensure smooth rotation.

Sketch Your Design

Draw a simple plan on paper. Mark the center point where the bearing will sit and outline the outer edge. If you're adding decorative borders or cutouts, note them now.

Step 2: Cutting the Wood

Marking the Circle

Place the board on a flat surface and use a compass or a string tied to a pencil to mark a perfect circle. If you're working with a circular table top, you can use a protractor or a laser level for more accuracy.

Cutting the Outer Edge

Using a jigsaw or a table saw with a circular blade, cut along the marked line. Keep the blade steady to avoid wobbling. If you're making a multi tiered design, cut each level separately.

Carving the Center Hole

The center hole should accommodate the bearing. Measure the bearing's diameter and mark a circle slightly larger (about 1/4 inch extra) to allow for a snug fit. Drill a pilot hole and then use a hole saw or a spade bit to create the hole. Smooth the edges with a sanding block.

Step 3: Preparing the Bearing

Choosing the Right Bearing

Lazy Susan bearings come in two main types:

- Ball bearings – smooth, low friction, ideal for heavy loads.
- Roller bearings – slightly less expensive, good for lighter items.

Make sure the bearing's inner diameter matches the hole you cut.

Attaching the Bearing

Place the bearing on the board's center. If it's a ball bearing, you may need to apply a thin layer of adhesive to prevent it from spinning too freely. For a roller bearing, a small amount of wood glue on the bearing's base will keep it in place.

Step 4: Assembling the Base

Creating a Stable Base

If you’re mounting the Lazy Susan on a table or countertop, you’ll need a sturdy base. Cut a rectangular or square piece of wood that fits under the Lazy Susan. Attach the bearing to this base with screws or nails. Ensure the bearing sits flush and is level.

Attaching the Rotating Tray

Once the bearing is secured, place the rotating tray onto it. The tray should sit evenly on the bearing with no wobble. Use clamps to hold the tray in place while you secure it to the base with screws or wood glue. If you’re using dowels, drill holes at the corners and insert them into the tray to reinforce the structure.

Step 5: Finishing Your Lazy Susan

Sanding

Start with 120 grit sandpaper to remove rough edges. Progress to 220 grit for a smoother surface, and finish with 320 grit for a fine finish. Pay special attention to the outer rim and the center where the bearing sits.

Applying Finish

Choose a finish that matches your décor. Varnish or polyurethane offers a glossy, durable surface. Oil finishes, like Danish oil or linseed oil, provide a natural look and enhance the wood’s grain. Apply at least two coats, allowing each to dry fully before sanding lightly with 320 grit sandpaper.

Adding Decorative Touches

Consider adding a border, carving a design, or painting a pattern. If you want a modern look, a simple black rim around the edge can create contrast. For a rustic feel, leave the wood natural or stain it with a warm tone.

Optional: Multi Tiered Lazy Susan

Building a multi tiered Lazy Susan adds extra storage but requires careful alignment. Each level should be centered on the same bearing axis. Use dowels or rods as vertical supports to keep the tiers from wobbling. Secure each tier with screws to the central support, and ensure that the bearing can rotate freely through all layers.

Maintenance Tips

- Periodically check the bearing for looseness; tighten screws or re apply adhesive if needed.
- Clean the surface with a damp cloth and mild soap; avoid abrasive cleaners.
- Reapply finish every 1–2 years to maintain protection and appearance.
- For heavy loads, consider adding a second bearing or reinforcing the base.

Troubleshooting Common Issues

Problem: Lazy Susan Sticks or Spins Too Freely

Solution: Tighten the bearing or add a small amount of adhesive to reduce excessive play. If it spins too freely, you can use a slightly larger bearing or add a locking mechanism.

Problem: Uneven Rotation or Wobble

Solution: Check that the bearing is centered and seated evenly. Re level the base if necessary. Ensure the tray is

symmetrical and all screws are tightened uniformly.

Problem: Bearing Fails After a Few Months

Solution: Use a higher quality bearing and ensure proper lubrication. If the bearing is cheap or poorly made, consider replacing it with a new one.

Conclusion

Creating a Lazy Susan from scratch is a rewarding project that blends woodworking skills with practical design. By following these steps—planning the design, selecting quality materials, cutting precisely, and finishing thoughtfully—you'll end up with a custom rotating tray that enhances both the look and functionality of your kitchen or dining area. Not only does a homemade Lazy Susan save you money, but it also gives you the satisfaction of crafting a unique piece that reflects your personal style. Grab your tools, gather your materials, and start turning your table into a centerpiece of convenience and elegance.

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