

Lining up scarf joints

Once you have removed the planks from the sheet, they need to be joined to make the full length. We have added some extra holes in the planks so that this can be done effectively using a couple of nails and some string.

We have found that the best base for scarfing is a sheet of cheap plywood laid as flat as possible – either on a floor or on trestles – the latter saving your knees and back!

To help you align the planks correctly, we drill holes on the edge of the planks and one in the middle of the scarf joint itself. The edge holes will where possible be frame positions or, if there are no frames in the boat, they can be used for wiring up. There is also a plan of the planks which shows the alignment line in Blue.

1. Unless you are going to paint the boat inside and out, find the best match in the grain and pattern between the different parts of each plank.
2. Mark the edge of the scarf very lightly with a pencil. If in doubt, the span of the scarf is double the distance from the scarf edge to the alignment hole.
3. Carefully cut the scarf using a very sharp plane or sander. Though obviously a perfectly cut scarf is best, this is one operation where removing a little too much wood is better than too little. Too little will give you an unsightly ridge, a little too much and the joint is filled with epoxy.
4. Pin the longer section of the plank to the base board with two pins, one of them being the Base hole on the plan.
5. Lay the short section over the long, and lightly tap a pin through the Scarf Hole. The short section must be able to swivel around the pin, but you will need to remove it later.
6. Tap a pin into the in the Reference Hole in the end of the short section so that it is secure in the hole, but not into the base board, allowing the section to swivel around the pin in the Scarf Hole.
7. Go back to the Base Hole, and wrap sufficient thread clockwise around it so that it will not slip. Run the thread to the pin in the other reference point and turn it clockwise around it until it is secure. Swivel the section around the Scarf Pin until the thread is just touching on the scarf pin, then sight down the thread to ensure that it is straight.
8. When you are happy that the thread is straight, drive the Ref Pin into the base board. The short section can now be swivelled round to allow the face of the scarf to be glued up, then returned to the correct position for clamping up.
9. Remove the Scarf Pin, and slide a sheet of polythene underneath the joint so that your plank is not glued to the base board .
10. Before clamping, double-check that the joint is correctly aligned by pushing a pin through the scarph hole.

