

Ok, time for a do-over. You cut the dovetail slot in your molding *first* (using a router table - you can do it in one or two passes. If you go for two passes, the first pass is with a straight bit. It's not that big of a deal to do it in one pass). Next, you cut your keys so that they fit in the slot. You want about 1/16 gap so that the key will pull the molding tightly to the case.

Attaching the molding:

1. Glue the front piece of molding in place (long grain - to long grain).
2. Insert the dovetail key into the molding. Bring the molding level with the top (or slightly proud) and clamp the key in place at the front of the case. Drill & countersink your first screw. You should pair up screws about 1 1/2" apart, then leave a gap of 2-3 inches and repeat. Keep sliding the molding back and screwing the key in places. After the entire key is in place, you cut out 1-2 inch sections between the pairs. Use a handsaw and a chisel.

Before you cut away the keys, make sure you can slide the molding on. It should take a little muscle, but be careful not to make it too loose. If it is too loose, you can hand plane the narrow side of the key (you need to unscrew it). If it is too tight, loosen up the screws and use veneer to shim between the lid and the key.

Also, no need to elongate the holes. Just drill & countersink. Be sure to use wax on your screws!

Lastly, glue the miter and the first dovetail key near the front. Other than that, no glue. When it dries, cut the excess molding off the back with a handsaw.

"I've done it once. That makes me an expert."

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[SteveWeb](#)

Member

Registered: 11/03/05

Posts: 401

Loc: NY

 **Re:
breadboard
edge on
blanket**

chest lid

[Re:
[mattpotoff](#)]

#2255105
- 03/06/06

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10:43 AM

Beautiful, thanks for the detailed info.

When you say that there should be a 1/16" gap, where is that gap measured? It seems to me that if there's a 1/16" gap between the broad side of the dovetail key and the wide part of the slot, this will make the molding fit too tight, possibly to the point of not sliding onto the key at all once it's screwed in place.

Why wouldn't I plane the key flush with the bottom of the slot, with no gap, before I screw the key in place?

Steve Goldstein
[SteveWeb Woodworking](#)

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Member

Registered: 05/24/05

Posts: 137

Loc: Ann Arbor, MI

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11:32 AM

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Right, the gap is measured from the flat part of the slot to the wide part of the key. The point of the gap *is* to make it tight. Of course, the gap might be closer to 1/32". If the key fit perfectly, or was slightly tall, the molding might wobble or stand off from the lid by a hair. Since you don't get to use glue, you've got to make a good mechanical joint.

This part of the game is a lot about guessing and finesse. If the molding won't slide on because the key was cut too thin, try shimming with veneer between the screws.

In the end, only you will know what a PITA this method is versus using a brad nailer, but in 200 years, your molding will still be in place.


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OK, thanks. Another stupid question just came to mind:

What kind/size screws do you recommend for holding the key in place?


Steve Goldstein
[SteveWeb Woodworking](#)

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Member

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I use 3/4" no. 6. Mr. Becksvort claims to use no. 4's.