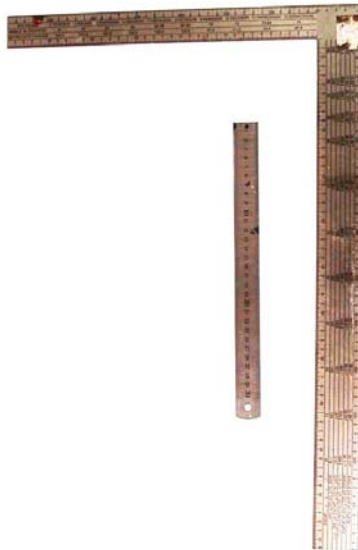


Canvas: Making a stretcher. How to put together a stretcher from pre-made stretcher bars.

EQUIPMENT: What you will need



4 Stretcher bars



Right Angle Measure



Mallet or Hammer



Flat and Clean work surface



Ruler or Tape measure



Mallet or Hammer

SAFETY: How to stay safe

Respect your sharp tools.

Never leave the staple gun where children can reach it.

Use a benchtop the right height for you to work on, or work on the floor.

GLOSSARY: Words you need to understand

Stretcher	Wooden frame that the canvas is pulled out over and stapled to.
Stretcher bars	Pairs of wood which make up the stretcher frame.
Tongue	The wooden section in the corner of the bar, which sticks out .
Groove	The slit or gap in the corner of the stretcher bar that the tongue slides into.
Strainer	A thin and light wooden form used to stretch small canvases.
Bracing	Extra bars that hold large stretchers flat and straight.

Making a Stretcher

Select the size of the stretcher

Decide on the size of your canvas and choose four stretcher bars.

- Choose two even pairs of stretcher bars
- Measure them to check they are the right size

Stretcher bars can get twisted or bent over time, or if they come up to the desert from a cool place. If you have one with a twist or a bend, put it away and get another.



Arrange bars

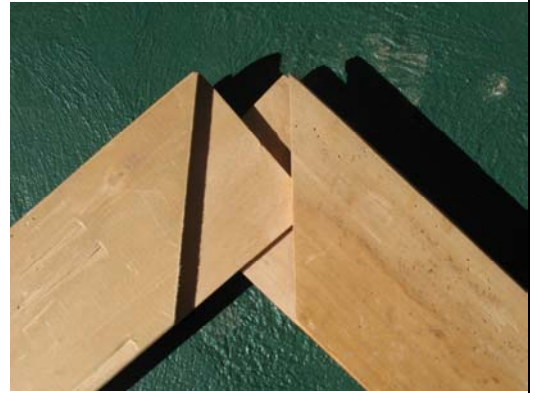
Place all four pieces on a flat clean surface or table

- Put the pairs opposite each other
- Put the rounded lip side of the bars facing the table



Join bars

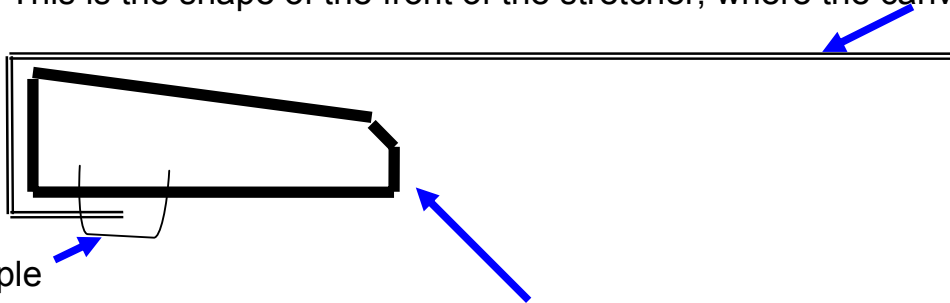
- Join each piece together with the **tongue** on one fitting into the **groove** on the one next to it
- Push the two sides together to make a corner.



Check edges meet correctly

Make sure all the stretcher bars have the same curved edge on the same side.

- This is the shape of the front of the stretcher, where the canvas will sit.



staple

- This is the way the rounded edges and the sloped front of the stretcher bar sits underneath the canvas.

Knock stretcher bars together to make stretcher

Stand the frame up

- Using the mallet, gently tap the corners together



Square the corners

Check all the corners are square with the angle measure.

- Use the mallet to tap gently until they are all square.



Finish

The finished stretcher will make a square or rectangular form with straight sides and corners.



TIPS: Stretching Large Canvas

A large size canvas will need a stretcher that has extra supports to keep the right shape. It will have **bracing** – which is the name for the extra wood pieces that make the stretcher a good strong one.

Most bracing will be made of two pieces crossed in the centre at the back. This supports the sidebars to stop long sides from bending inwards. It keeps the stretcher flat too.

Sometimes only one piece is used, running from the middle of the long sidebar across the centre to the middle of the other sidebar.

Selecting the correct kind of stretcher

Stretchers are mostly made of Australian Hardwood, or Plantation Pine. They vary greatly in the thickness and depth of the bars. Get advice from the stretcher maker about the best kind for your size canvas and weight of canvas.

Tiny canvases are put onto a mini stretcher called a **strainer**, which is made as a solid frame in light and thin timber. It is used the same way as a stretcher with the canvas rolled over the side and onto the back. The strainer needs very short staples or tacks to attach the canvas onto.