



Now you have used your Cargo Cycles Pallet dismantling Bar, you should have a nice pile of reclaimed pallet timbers. It is now the time to remove the nails: A lot of pallets are made using ribbed or spiral nails and these can be extremely difficult to remove; perseverance and perspiration will win through, all that is required is time and effort and a good claw hammer or claw style crowbar:



A good tip is to have a tin of brightly coloured paint to hand. If you are unable to remove a nail, or snap it off in the timber, mark it with the paint. This will help you to spot it when sawing the timber and you'll not ruin a saw blade. It will also make it more visible when you are handling the timber and so you can see it before ripping a gaping, bloody, and painful gash in your hand on a protruding sharp rusty nail point... (Been there, done that!)

By now you should have a nice large pile of de-nailed, reclaimed pallet timber; time to think about your project and what you want to make.

Sketch it out on a piece of paper, and use only one unit of measurement: inches, centimetres, millimetres, etc. and stick with them. I am an engineer and I work in mm. So 1.2 metres (m) or 120 centimetres (cm) is 1200 mm.

With your basic plan now on paper select the timbers for each section; side walls, ends, roof, top, lid, etc. and sort the timbers into piles for each.

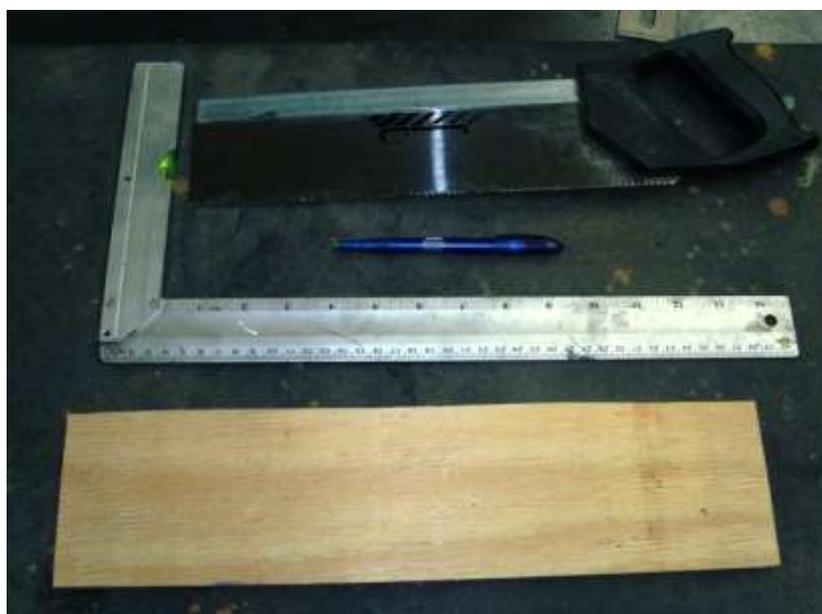
When marking out the timber use a pencil and if possible use only one tape measure, rule and square. Measure twice and cut once; it will pay dividends in the long run.

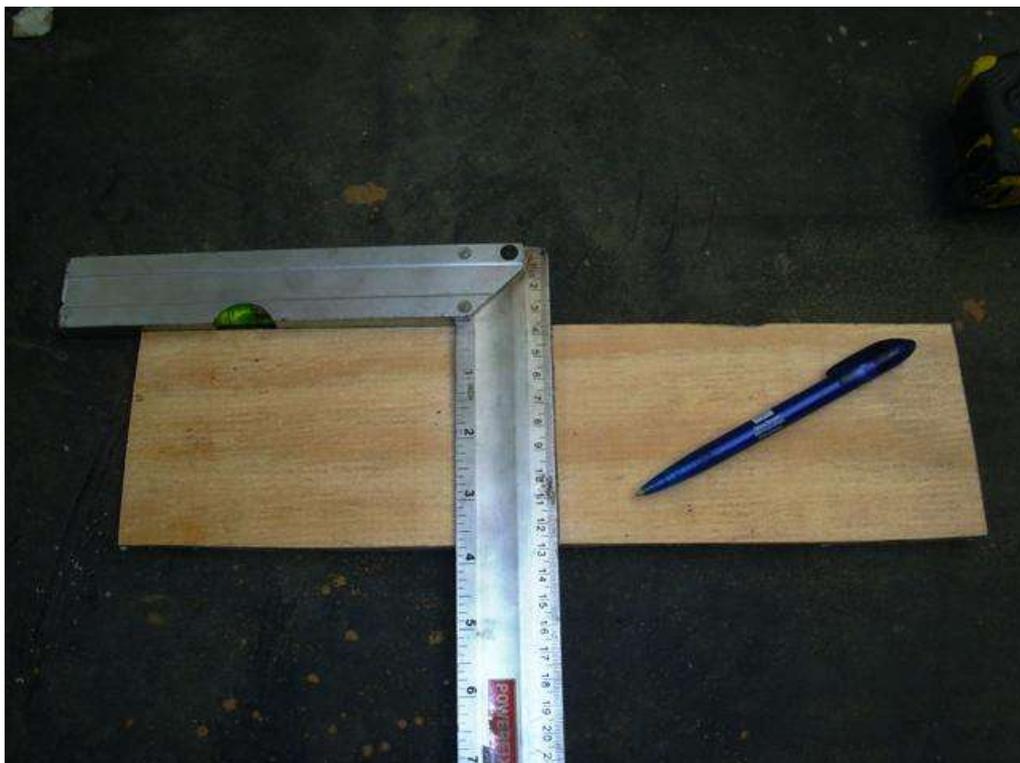
Most panel and mitre saws have a standard "square" (90 degrees) and mitre (45 degrees) built into the handle for quick marking out. Just butt the saw's handle up against the timber and run the pencil down the back edge of the blade. In this photo I have positioned the saw on the left in the "square" (90 degree) position, and the saw on the right in the "mitre" (45 degree) position.



Another tip for when working with reclaimed pallet timber (and for marking out other woodworking jobs around the house) is this:

Get a decent piece of timber with at least one straight edge, and carefully mark the centre out with a biro:

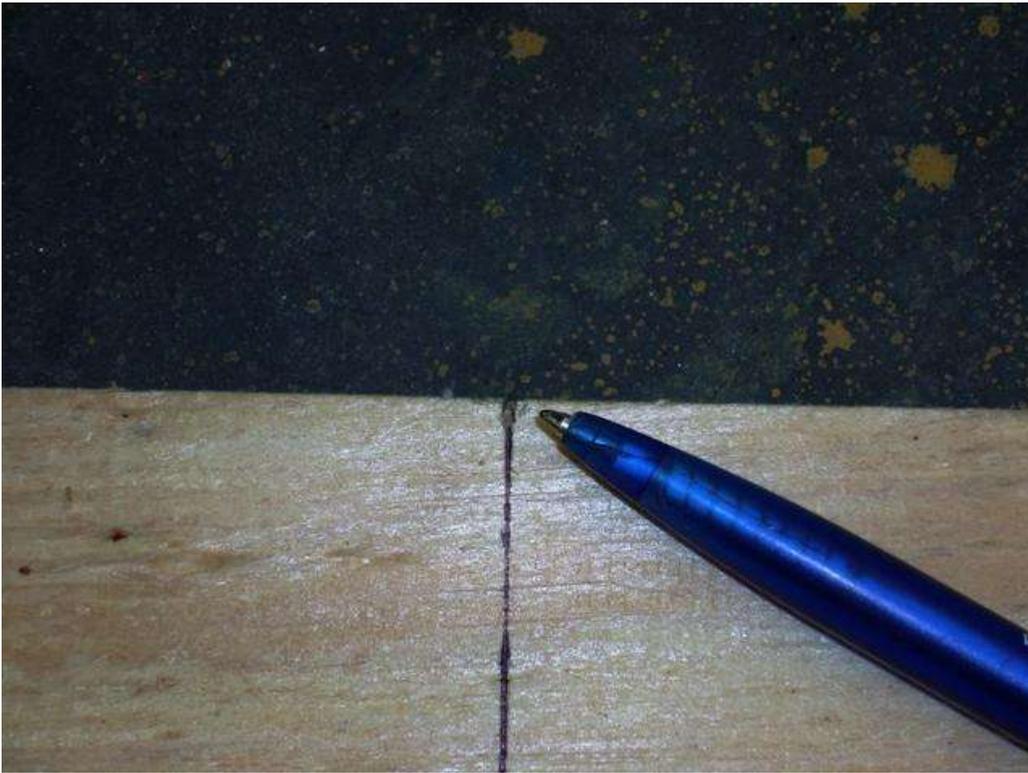




Then half the distance between the centre line and the end of the piece of wood:



Using a saw place a small notch on the end of each line:



Then you can use this template to mark out the centre of a piece of wood without having to measure it, place the two outside notches on the edges of you plank and mark it with a pencil, and then repeat this operation further along the plank:



Then using a straight edge, join the two marks to get the centre line:



You can also use the end corners of the template to make equal distance lines on a piece of wood for either sawing down, or marking out equal distance screw holes, etc.



Where ever possible, cut your timbers using a mitre box. These are inexpensive, this one came from B&Q and included the saw for only £4.99



Without a doubt always use good quality wood screws for the final assembly, by all means hold the frames together with nails as you assemble up, but then screw it all down to make a pukka job. Always countersink the screw heads, it makes a better job, and it saves you from catching and ripping your clothes on them at a later date. I always buy boxes of zinc plated or A2 stainless steel wood screws and use a waterproof (marine) foaming polyurethane wood glue for pallet wood projects; try Screwfix, Toolstation or B&Q Tradepoints, etc. for the very best prices. When you have your project completed, you will need to preserve it. Last year I acquired approximately 4 gallons of water based Cuprinol from Norwich Freecycle. The Cuprinol was various different colours and so most of it got mixed together to make a sort of reddish mid brown. One trick that I have learnt with the first coat of waterproof exterior wood preserver is to mix it 50-50 with builders PVA to make an excellent primer/undercoat and brush it on. Leave it in a covered, well ventilated, dry place for a few days, and then re-coat with neat wood preservative Your project will then have a finish that lasts and looks good for years.