

Chapter 1. Using Sanding Shims



Here are some tips for sanding and contouring your Intarsia to look more realistic and save some time.

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I would make sanding shims for the wings, ears, body, legs, and the bone. Make sure the material for the shims is flat and has a smooth surface for taping.



Cut "Sanding Shims" close to the size of the parts you want to sand as a unit. Your projects will have a consistent contour which will make it look more realistic.



Apply the tape to the back of the parts (when possible).
This makes it easier to see the individual parts to ensure there is enough tape to hold the parts down.



Tape the body section next. This is a fast way to get the basic shape of the dog's body.
Sand the neck area down and the sides of the body. Then take the parts off to add more definition to the fur.



Tape the ears next. When placing the shim on the back - keep the shim within the edge of parts. *It's great to be able to re-assemble the sections while sanding.*

How To Tape Multiple Raising Shims



When you have multiple raising shims it is important to place them correctly under the sections. Put tape on all the shims (including the sanding shim). Look at the parts that need to attach to help with tape placement. Reassemble the sections that are already taped to help with the placement of the raising shims.



It's helpful to put the raising shim on top of the parts to determine which pieces get placed first/next. Above the 1st shim is on top of the parts, I put the rest of the parts on the sanding shim. *Do not press the parts down too much, just lightly, in case you need to adjust some parts.* I accidentally got clear double sided tape.



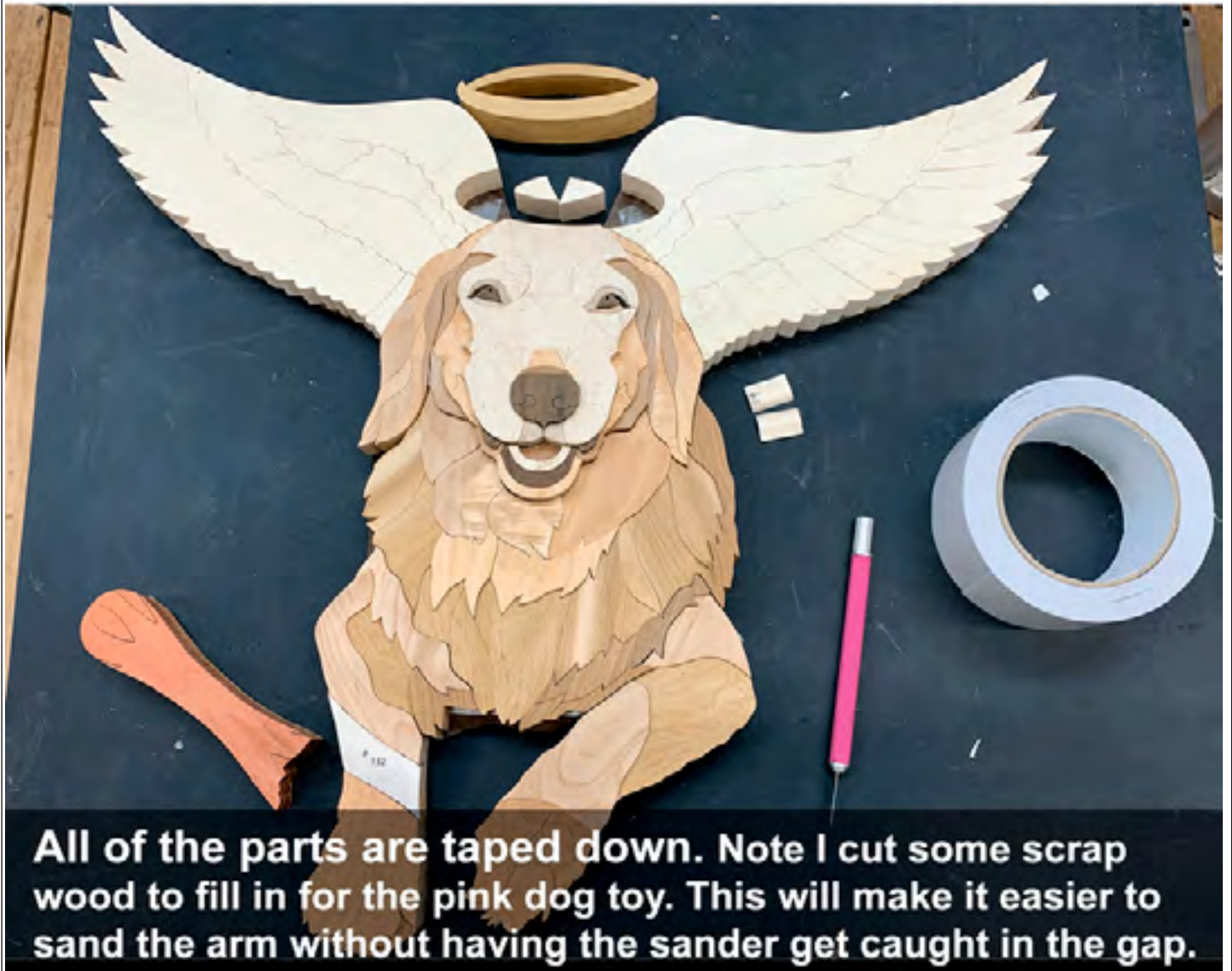
Peel the tape and put the first shim in place. Note the 2nd shim is placed on top of the remaining face pieces. Put all the exposed parts on top of the 1st shim.



Peel the tape and put the second shim in place. As you place the parts make sure there is enough tape to hold the parts in place.



Peel the tape and put the third shim in place. Put the parts in place. Then put the final shim and remaining sections in place. If needed adjust the parts to get as close a fit as possible. Then firmly press all the parts.



All of the parts are taped down. Note I cut some scrap wood to fill in for the pink dog toy. This will make it easier to sand the arm without having the sander get caught in the gap.

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Chapter 2. Sanding - “Rough In”

Find as many photos of the subject as a guide to sanding.



Start with the background sections first. The wings are behind the head and body. Mark a line about half the thickness along the edge that joins the face. Sand a gradual taper from the wing tip down to the face.



After sanding mark the thickness to any joining parts. I sanded the part of the wing that is inside the halo separately. Remember these steps are just “roughing in”.



Sand a gradual taper from the tip of the toes down toward the body. Half the thickness is a safe amount to start with.

After sanding the taper round the sides of the legs. If any parts are loose it is best to take the time and re-tape. It's almost impossible to hold the parts together and try to sand the sections.

These steps are designed to remove the bulk of the wood - starting to shape the dog.





Mark where the legs join the body. Watch these lines, try not to sand below the guide lines.

Start to form the neck by sanding a gradual taper midway toward the face. As you can see I am constantly marking on the surface of the wood the areas to help contour the piece. I pencilled in the shoulders, a continuation of the arms to the body.



Mark where the neck joins the face.

When I'm sanding I try to hold the pieces so I can see the lines, they are like a safety net. Sanding the face as a unit makes it easier to visualize, and blend the raised sections to make it look more realistic.



It is helpful to have photos of the subject as a guide for sanding. I mark the highest point, the tip of the nose, on the surface of the wood. Everything else will be sanded lower to make this area stand out. I like to start with the forehead, blending the raised nose. The forehead tapers down toward the halo. After blending the top, start tapering the sides of the face down toward the ears.

The ears are in front of the face, therefore should be thicker. Remember this is the roughing in stage, don't be concerned with making it perfect.

Mark the thickness of the face (after tapering the sides of the face below the thickness of the ears).

Sand the ears next. The ears attach on the upper part of the head, sand the ears the same thickness. As they drop down to the sides of the face they should be a little thicker. Taper the ears down toward the wings, follow a similar angle as the face.



At this point the project is “roughed in”. You can gradually start taking the parts off the temporary sanding shims. I’ve marked areas I will sand to make the fur look fluffy.

The great part is the basic shape is there, the bulk of the wood is removed. Now all that is needed will be taking 1/16” to 1/8” off to add more detail. Like sanding an 1/8” taper to make each row of fur stand out. The same with the wings, taper each feather down slightly.

