

The making of a threshold -- DIY & Pro compared.

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Stephanie had her kitchen re-done but the floor got even higher than before and there was the need for a massive threshold between the hardwood floors and the kitchen tile, a good 1-1/2in high and about 3 inches wide. When faced with a \$300 bid for two thresholds, she decided to do it herself. So she bought the oak, and then wrote me for help. Good plan Steph. Now I didn't just want to go out and do the job for her, but I didn't want to make her work too hard either. So I decided to take the opportunity to demonstrate that there are almost always several ways to accomplish the same thing. The first step is to not rely on measurements for a job like this where nothing is square, but cut out a perfect template from poster board, then make a wooden copy. She spent about an hour doing that well before we got there. One trick she learned was to make it in two pieces taped together in the middle. That allows for stretching it out until she finally cuts the ends correctly. We saw that below some jagged hardwood ends, there was a smooth plywood base that we could set the threshold on, so we decided not to fill in the uneven hole, but cut away the obstructions. In the next segment of this TV show I showed in studio how to fill in the holes for this kind of a job. I got Stephanie cutting away with a sharp chisel. The trick here is not to attack the wood with the full edge of the chisel, but tip it sidewise so that the point of one corner penetrates first. Just to make her feel really bad, I finished up the job using the FEIN Multi-Master, a power tool that has a wide variety of saw blades that simply vibrate back and fourth, cutting quickly and cleanly through the hardwood. Next we needed to transfer that template to the hardwood. We cut the odd shaped ends exactly to size with my Japanese finishing saw. A circular saw was used to rough out the width. Don't try to cut close to the final line with a circular saw, it is not a finish carpentry tool. That will leave about 1/8th to 1/4 or more of an inch to finish off carefully to get to the template line. A belt sander is one of the most common tools, and with 80 grit sandpaper, it is a wood remover. This will not be the fastest way to shave the wood down, but if this is all you have to work with, it certainly will work and give excellent results. If you have a hand planer it will go faster, and even faster if you have a power hand planer. Even at that, you will probably want to finish it off with the belt sander with a 100 grit sandpaper. The board was too thick as well. This could be shaved down with the same tools as above but I wanted to show the advantage of using a "parallel face surface planer", which will shave one side down exactly parallel to the other side. It is quick and easy to use and indispensable for any serious finish carpenter, especially in this fairly portable format. Finish with a little hand sanding moving with the grain of the Oak, it will finish the piece off much faster than a power sander which moves in all directions. I would recommend staining and finishing the piece before gluing it to the floor, that way you don't have to worry about spilling over to the materials around it, and you don't have to live with the odours, or worry about anyone stepping on it too soon. Now if you just want to fill in a hole in the floor -- [click here](#).

Keywords:

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