

A STURDY, PORTABLE TABLE

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I wanted the lightest weight, portable table still sturdy enough for Rolfig a client and holding my 200 pound body.

I built one, hoping it would give me at least one good summer's use before needing modification. It's lasted five years with no signs of collapse anywhere so it might be of interest to some of you.

I used $\frac{1}{2}$ inch luan plywood (looks L.L. Bean-ish) over $\frac{3}{4}$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch clear pine ribs. Glued and nailed it looks like the sketch on the following page.(Figure 1)

Using only pine for sides proved to bendy, so I glued and nailed a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " strip of the $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood along the inside face of each side. Proved totally sturdy.

For the mattress I got 2 pieces of dense foam rubber 5" thick, and a local lady sewed two zippered cases of light-weight canvas joined by a heavy seam along the middle bottom edges to permit folding the overall length in half. Handles on the mattress would be nice, although I've not needed them.

I should mention that screwing in the legs is a hassle, and the threads get banged up, and the pipes roll around in the car. I touched up the threads with a thread file every few months when I traveled a lot. If you want to try integrated legs which fold in, even though they add weight, the best idea I've tried came from an engineer concerning "shear". You don't want the legs to twist: twisting is what makes the hinges come loose. Twisting (called shear) is eliminated by running a $\frac{1}{2}$ " threaded steel rod through the width of the table, through a pair of legs, and fastening its washers and nuts. This keeps the line of tracking precisely square and the hinges stable. (See Figure 2)

When I was in the process of building my table, I met a cabinet maker who said he used a core of 1" styrofoam glued between $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood faces to make exceptionally strong, lightweight, rigid panels with very high tensile strength. He said you could drive a truck on them without denting them. It sounds like a good idea, so I might try it if my ribbed table gets old. *