

all about the Leigh Super Jig

Whether it's variably spaced dovetails or precision box joints, this new jig has it all covered and then some.

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For a copy of the original article on the Leigh D4, take a look at our website: ShopNotes.com

A number of years ago, we featured an article on the D4 dovetail jig from Leigh. It's one of the premier dovetail jigs on the market. And for good reason — it can handle just about any dovetail task you could think of. Its only real downside was the cost of about \$400. Check out the margin for more information on getting the original article on the D4.

To bring many of the benefits and features of the D4 to a larger woodworking audience at a lower cost, Leigh has introduced its line of Super Jigs. The 18" model is shown below, but Leigh has 12" and 24" versions available, as well.

A quick look below covers most of the key features. The most notable differences between the D4 and

the Super Jig are in the design of the fingers that control the spacing and layout of the dovetails, and the unique E-Bush (more on this later).

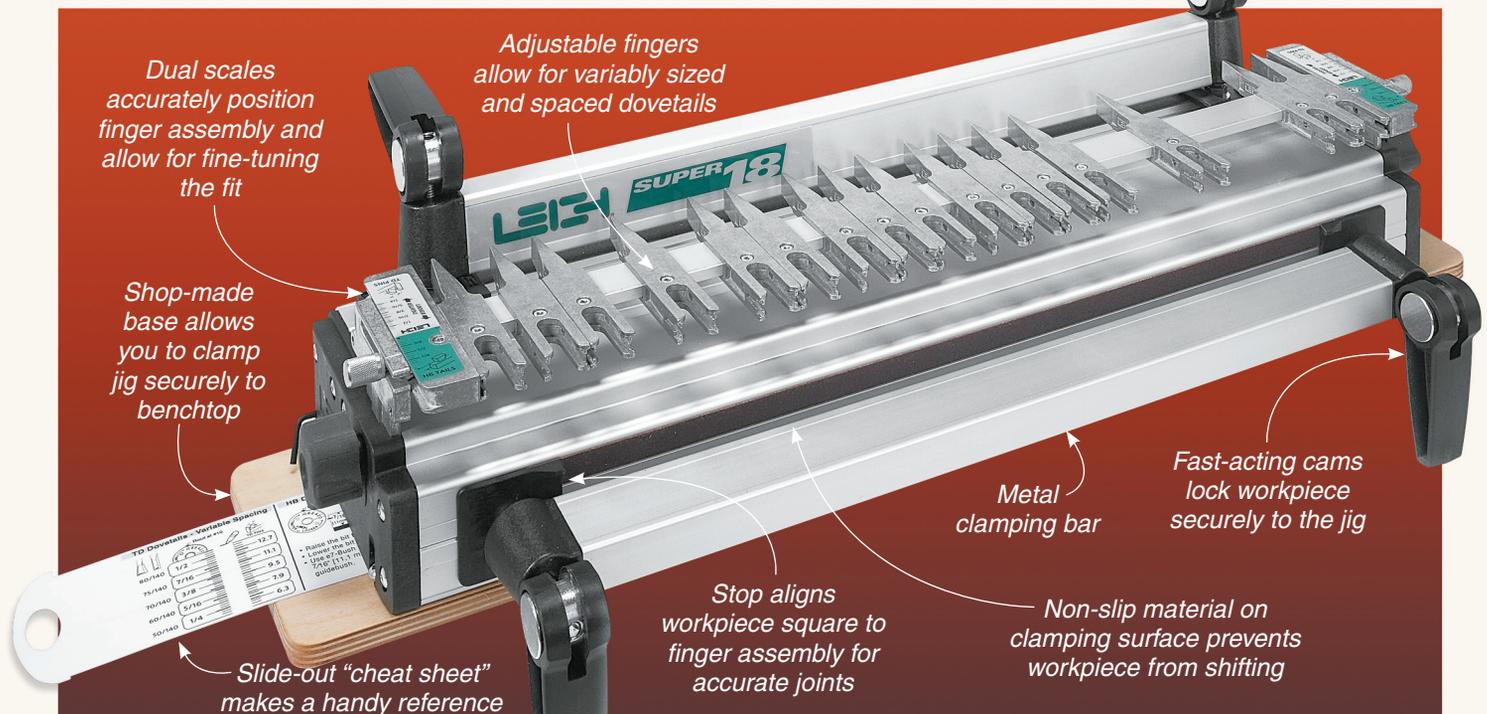
The Finger Assembly. The single-finger design of the Super Jig still allows for customizing the look of your dovetails, whether you're cutting half-blind or through dovetails. You can cut variably spaced and sized dovetails however you'd like.

Fixed Pin Size. Your only real limitation is the size of the pin. It's fixed for each dovetail bit you use with the jig. So is that a problem? Not in my opinion. I'm usually more interested in the variation of the size and spacing of the tails, not the size of the pins.

Production Option. Okay, so it cuts great custom dovetails. What else does it have going for it? Well, if you need to make a lot of half-blind drawers, you can set up the Super Jig to cut both parts of the joint at one time. That's something new for any of the Leigh jigs.

To do this on the Super Jig, each finger is drilled to accept a flexible rod that limits the travel of the router bit. This turns the overall finger assembly into a "fixed template," like you see on inexpensive half-blind dovetail jigs.

Adjustment. Regardless of the type of dovetails you cut, the setup starts with positioning the finger



Dual scales accurately position finger assembly and allow for fine-tuning the fit

Adjustable fingers allow for variably sized and spaced dovetails

Shop-made base allows you to clamp jig securely to benchtop

Slide-out "cheat sheet" makes a handy reference

Stop aligns workpiece square to finger assembly for accurate joints

Metal clamping bar

Fast-acting cams lock workpiece securely to the jig

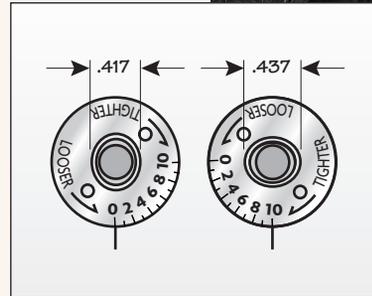
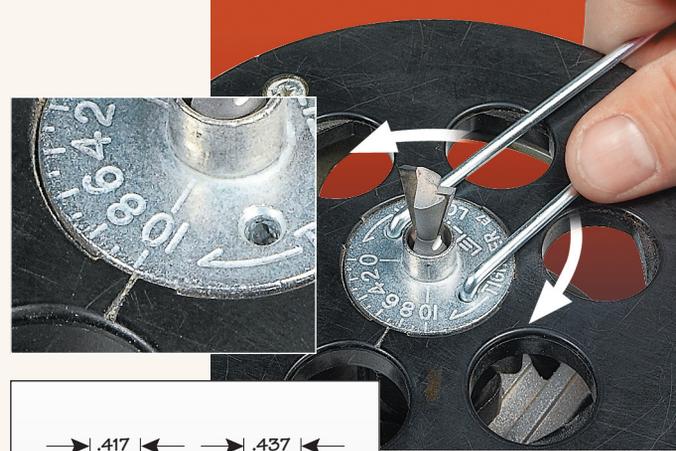
Non-slip material on clamping surface prevents workpiece from shifting



▲ **Scales.** A precision dual scale at each end of the assembly helps align the fingers and allows you to “dial-in” in a perfect fit.



▲ **Fingers.** To customize the size and spacing of the dovetails, just slide the fingers into position and lock them securely in place.



▲ **E-Bush.** By rotating the E-Bush on the router, you can “tweak” the fit of box joints, sliding dovetails, and even half-blind dovetails.

assembly and individual fingers to suit the task at hand.

Like the *D4*, the finger assembly on the *Super Jig* is reversible. With the green portion of the scales forward, you’re set for half-blind dovetails (left photo above). And with the white portion forward, through dovetails are only a few steps away. These scales make the overall setup a simple task.

If you take a look at the photo to the right above, you’ll note that all it takes to fix the arrangement of the fingers is to slide them where you want them and then lock them in place with the screwdriver supplied with the jig. Once you rout the tails and pins, you’ll find that everything matches perfectly.

Box Joints. Besides dovetails, the *Super Jig* is a great choice for routing box joints. With the same assembly, $\frac{5}{16}$ " and $\frac{5}{8}$ " box joints are a snap. And in the box below, you can learn more about an accessory template that will handle a wider range of box joint sizes.

The E-Bush. As if all this wasn’t enough, Leigh includes its latest innovation with the package. And that’s the new *E-Bush*.

Unlike a standard router bushing that’s symmetrical, the *E-Bush* is actually a bit elliptical in shape, hence its name. You can see what I’m talking about in the photos and drawings above.

What the *E-Bush* allows you to do is “tweak” the fit of your box joints

until they fit perfectly. All you need to do is rotate the *E-Bush* slightly. As you do this, you essentially make the cutting path narrower or wider. And since you never have to adjust the router bit, fine-tuning any joint is quick and easy.

Cost. You’d think that since a *Super Jig* has so many capabilities, it probably isn’t all that much less to own, right? Well, you can buy a *Super Jig 12"* model for just under \$200. And the 18" and 24" models run \$270 and \$370, respectively. Not a bad deal for all the capability built into the *Super Jig*.

The *Super Jigs* and optional accessories are available through many woodworking stores, online retailers, and catalogs. 🛠️

Box Joint Add-On: Adjustable Template

To expand the range of box joints sizes you can create with the *Super Jig*, all you need is the specialized box joint template at right. Like the basic jig, it uses an *E-Bush* to guide the router and control the fit of the joint. But instead of one *E-Bush*, you get a pair.

One *E-Bush* is used with the $\frac{3}{8}$ " side of the template, and the other is used with the $\frac{1}{2}$ " side. With the two *E-Bush* options and the dual-sided

template, you can rout box joints in the following sizes: $\frac{3}{32}$ ", $\frac{1}{8}$ ", $\frac{3}{16}$ ", $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{3}{8}$ ", and $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The precision machining of the assembly makes this possible. A pin that slides along the template allows you to shift the fingers precisely to cut the mating slots of each box joint.

This template is just going into production. So the best option for availability and pricing is to check the Leigh website at leighjigs.com.



▲ **A Range of Box Joints.** Rout different size box joints with an adjustable template and two different *E-Bush* options.