

Design*Sponge

diy project: recycled leather & wood shelf

by Kate Pruitt



A hanging leather shelving project has been on my to-do list for a while; to be honest, the biggest delay was just finding the right belts. Has anyone else discovered that thrift-shop leather belts are often unreasonably overpriced? Regardless, a little patience yielded some great finds: one super long thick black belt and a couple dark brown well-worn beauties, all for less than \$10, which makes the cost of this shelf less than \$15.

What I love most about this project is that it is extremely unfussy: a mix of belts looks great; the more worn the wood, the better; and the whole structure is very easy to size up or down, customize (painted shelves, new or colored leather, etc.) and adjust as needed. The only difficulty is that it starts to get a bit heavy if you use thick wood as I did, so I recommend getting a helping hand for the installation, especially if you size the project up to a larger shelving unit. Happy crafting! — *Kate*

*(P.S. There are several other DIYs shown in these images (occupational hazard: so many DIY objects everywhere). I potted some plants in Brenna's paper clay barnacles (on the bottom shelf), and I love them! Also, the furniture below is the chair bench project I made for the D*S book. Lastly, hanging beside the shelf is the geometric 3D wall art.)*

Read the full how-to after the jump . . .



Materials

- 2 wood boards (mine are 5" wide by 30" long)
- 2–4 long leather belts

- carpet tacks/nails
- hammer
- measuring tape/ruler
- pencil

Instructions

1. Mark both boards 2" in from either side on the top and bottom. On the underside of the boards, you can draw a line along the 2" mark to make for easier aligning.



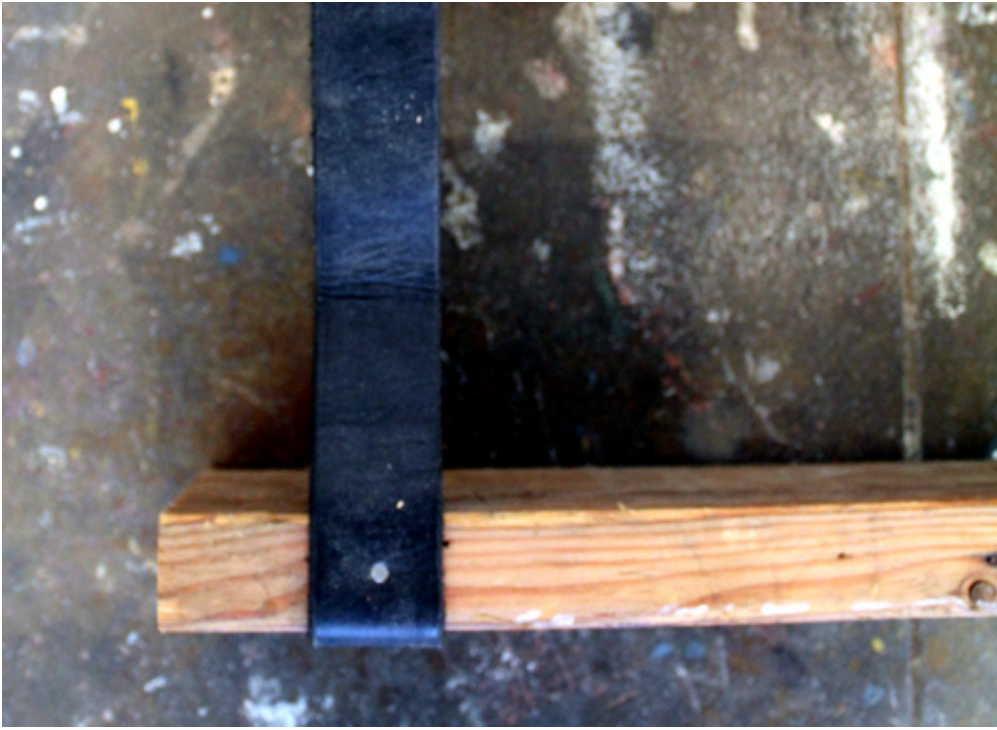
2. Strap the belts together to create two identical loops, about 60" in circumference. You may need to create extra holes in the belt to get the two straps to the same dimensions, but you can do this easily with a drill or an awl. Hold the first plank inside the two belt loops, with the loops positioned at the 2" marks, and reposition the belt buckles to where you like, making sure they aren't aligning with where you need to affix the shelves (which means at the bottom or 10" up from the base).



3. When you have the belts in the right place, hold the first belt so it can't move and turn the plank over so the underside is facing up. Hammer three nails into the belt, making sure the belt stays aligned with the 2" line. Repeat with the other belt on the left side.



4. Flip the board so the front edge is facing forward, and hammer one nail into the front of each board, securing the belts in place.



5. Lay the shelves down on their sides and position the second board 10" above the first board, aligned with the 2" mark. Hold the belt taut and make sure the planks remain exactly 10" apart. Hammer a nail into the front of the second board. Repeat on the other side.



6. Hold the second board in place so the backside is also exactly 10" apart from the first boards (this ensures the boards are level) and hammer the nails into the center of the belt where it hits the backside of each board. Repeat on the other side.



7. Almost done! The boards are now secured in place. Pull the tops of the loops tight and measure each one to ensure they are exact. If you need to adjust, you can easily add a new hole in the belt to change the lengths.



8. Once your loops are identical heights, your shelf is ready to hang! If you use thick wood, your shelf could be fairly heavy, so I recommend getting a friend to help. Use a level (I love this level app) to ensure the shelves are straight. Use longer nails and hammer them through the top back of the loop (so the nails are hidden by the front of the loop). You're done!









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