

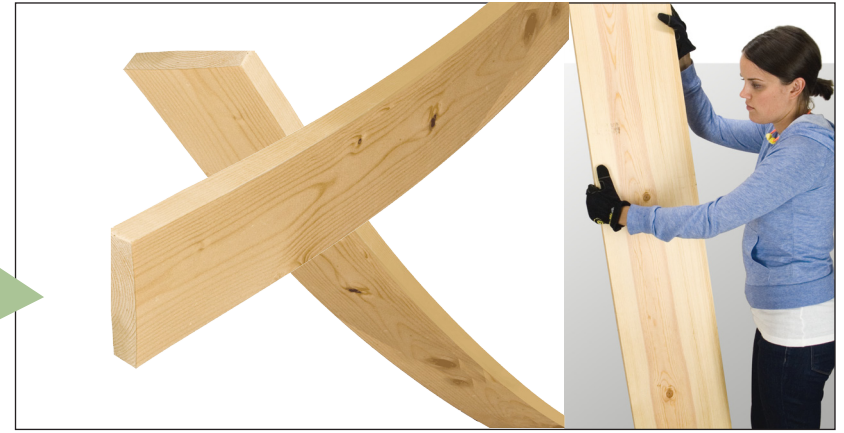
ebook series #2

## 3 Boards

Your guide to buying dimensional lumber

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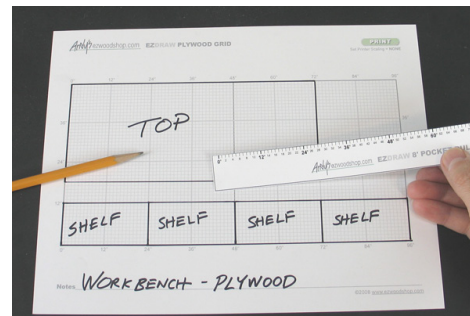
Cup, Bow, & Crook **Go**



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# Buying Lumber - What to Avoid

The lumber at most home centers is notoriously riddled with boards that are warped and twisted. Not so much of a problem if you're building a house or garage (there are workarounds for this), but for smaller projects, you'll need to be careful to avoid boards that have the following defects.



1

## Cup

Boards with *cup* have a "U" shape from edge to edge, and are nearly useless for building anything. The best way to check for cup is to lay the board flat on the floor and check for a side-to-side rocking motion. Then flip it over and check the other side.



## Bow

Bow is easy to spot. Hold the board edge-side up and peer down the full length with one eye. This will quickly tell you if the piece is warped from one end to the other. If you plan to cut the board in smaller pieces, a certain amount of bow won't hurt. However, if you need the full length – for projects like a workbench or picnic table, set aside and keep looking.

2



## Crook

Unfortunately a board with zero cup and zero bow can *still be crooked*. Best way to spot crook is to hold the board surface-side up and peer down the full length of the board. A severe case of crook makes an otherwise straight board look like a road with a curve. Unless you plan to cut this board into a lot of smaller pieces, set this aside and keep looking.

3



## Pulling Boards

Employees at most home centers *usually* understand that project builders need to sort through the lumber stacks to find usable boards. If you do it the right way (see box on right), you'll avoid making enemies at the store. You'll also avoid hurting yourself in the process—which is easy to do while digging through a 500-pound stack of lumber!

### THINK SAFETY



#### **Wear Gloves!**

Gloves will protect you from nasty splinters and jagged edges—plus all the other sharp and pointy edges that lurk throughout the store.

### **Keep Bar Codes Together**

There's no reason to make checkout clerks search for your bar codes. When back in the lumber aisle, arrange the boards on the cart so all the stickers are showing at one end.



### **Sort with Two Carts**



Most people attempt to sort lumber by pushing the bad boards to the front or back of the pile. This leaves an unstable (and dangerous) gutter in the center of the stack ready to collapse. Also, this method makes it difficult for the next shopper to find good boards, which are now covered and trapped by the discarded pieces.



A better approach to sorting lumber is to use **two lumber carts**—one cart for stacking boards you want to keep—and another cart for rejects. Once you have the boards you want, be sure to put the discards back on the shelf—but away from the main stack. Store employees can decide what's best to do with those boards.