

Transitional Arm Bevel Construction Notes - by Rolando Padron (aka Rolo)

(This is not a stand alone instructional guideline. Use these notes along with Kent Everett's video).

To all,

These notes are just my personal observations that made making my second arm bevel easier than the first. It also incorporates some of the comments Kent made in the video as alternatives and also some that were so quick and subtle, that it is possible to not catch them while watching the video and appreciate the benefit of applying his comments in your bevel design. Please note, I want to respect Kent's hard work on his video, and I am therefore not including design parameters and dimensions, as these are included on his dvd, and I highly recommend it to any who want to learn how to execute it into their builds.

Principle: The transitional arm bevel gradually goes from zero (near binding at waist), widens out to maximum width and depth (near widest point of lower bout) and transitions back to zero (near tail end, before tail block).

It seemed easier for me to cut and shape my arm bevel smoothly onto the bass side after thickening it, but before bending it. It's easy to pin down where your waist is on the side. Layout an arc. Cut it with band saw. Smooth out the arm bevel transition on a spindle sander.



The bevel block can be made of a soft, light wood, that is easy to shape. I used a block of western red cedar I had. Basswood is fine too. You end up with a banana type shape by the time you are through that transitions smoothly back to your kerfing.



Note the ledge between the bevel block and the side in the center picture. This will hold the binding you will place on it later.

Shape and cut your top. *SAVE THE CUT OFF FROM THE TOP OF THE BEVEL AREA. YOU WILL USE IT LATER.* Make sure the bevel transition along the top is smooth for the purfling scheme and veneer. Eyeball it using a spindle sander. Note: It is very important that the bevel area of the top has good support on the bevel block with as much material equivalent to the kerfing thickness. The picture below shows the top glued down, but before routing the edges even with the sides. Some hand tool work will be necessary to get the transitions to flow smoothly with the purfling and bindings.



Once purfling and binding channels are cut and smoothed out, purflings are installed on guitar as normal and along ledge formed by top that sets on bevel block. Kent Everett recommends an extra strip of the same color on the outer purfling to act as a buffer for the veneer in case you sand through it. In addition to that, I highly recommend another piece of binding material after the outer purfling. When you smooth out the veneer later, if you do slightly sand through it, you will hit the binding instead of a different wood that will tell on you. Also note the binding on the lower section of the bevel. Notice how the depth of it has been cut and smooth to allow it to bend easier into the the side. You thin the binding in this area AFTER the bindings are already bent. I recommend getting this transition on your bindings as smooth and the depth thickness to be as consistent as possible and with as much material on the bindings as possible. This will make the transition with the veneer smoother later on.



Notice how the piece of top cutoff material that is shaped to fit in after the purfling and binding piece on the top. *I told you it would be used later.*



I smoothed the bevel flat along the curve using a block plane and finished off with a scraper and finally with a sanding block. This doesn't take very long. Try to leave as much material on the binding pieces along the top and bottom as possible. It gives you more of a safety net for your veneer later.

Kent recommends gluing the veneer differently than I did by spreading glue on the bevel and also the veneer, letting it dry and then activating it again with a veneer iron. For me, I found it easier to just glue it on and taped it as shown. It held fine for me, seemed to be more flexible, and I had no air pockets. For this, you have options. I just wanted to show you what I felt more comfortable with and what gave me the best and easiest results. Note: the veneer cut is oversized and pay attention to grain direction and color so it blends well later with your binding. I cut the veneer with a razor blade parallel to the top and then parallel with the side. I did final smoothing with a sanding block. Please be careful when cutting and sanding. The veneer is thin.



Pictures above show gluing and taping of veneer and finished bevel. Notice how the veneer blends into the bindings on both the top edge and side edge.