

Building Miniature Furniture in 1:12 Scale

A Beginner's Guide

Miniature furniture building is one of the most rewarding parts of the dollhouse hobby. From selecting the right wood to choosing glues, stains, and finishes, this guide covers the essentials for building beautiful and realistic miniature furniture.

1 inch
in miniature
= 12 inches
in real life



What Is 1:12 Scale?

1:12 scale is the most common dollhouse scale.

- 1 inch in miniature = 12 inches in real life
- A 6-foot sofa becomes 6 inches long
- A standard kitchen table becomes approximately 2.5 inches tall



ESSENTIAL TOOLS

Basic Hand Tools

- Precision craft knife
- Self-healing cutting mat
- Metal ruler
- Mini clamps
- Fine-tip tweezers
- Needle files
- Small square
- Pin vise hand drill
- Sanding sticks & fine sandpaper

Power Tools (Optional)

- Mini table saw
- Rotary tool
- Scroll saw
- Mini belt sander
- Drill press



Types of Wood & How They Compare

WOOD TYPE	DIFFICULTY	GRAIN APPEARANCE	BEST FINISH	BEST FOR
Basswood	Easy	Light / Subtle	Paint	Beginner furniture, tables, cabinets, painted pieces
Birch Plywood	Moderate	Minimal	Paint / Stain	Structural pieces, cabinets, floors, shelving
Walnut	Moderate	Rich / Detailed	Stain	Fine furniture, traditional styles, high-end pieces
Maple	Moderate	Smooth / Clean	Paint / Clear coat	Modern designs, contemporary furniture

Use the right wood for the right job—this is the secret to strong, beautiful, and realistic miniature furniture.

Realism Is in the Details

LET'S
MAKE IT
MINI



- ✓ Use thin materials—oversized pieces look toy-like.
- ✓ Add texture carefully—wood grain, fabrics, and metal finishes should be proportional to scale.
- ✓ Avoid heavy paint—thin coats preserve detail.
- ✓ Include realistic wear—a little distressing adds authenticity.
- ✓ Use proper hardware—tiny hinges, pulls, and knobs make a huge difference.

Paints, Stains & Finishes



Acrylic Paints

Fast drying, easy cleanup, wide color range. Thin slightly and apply multiple light coats.



Chalk Paints

Matte finish, easy distressing, great coverage. Don't apply too heavily.

Wood Stains

Highlight natural grain and create realism. Test on scrap wood first and use light coats.

Choosing the Right Glue



PVA Wood Glue

Strong bond, dries clear, easy cleanup. Best for wood-to-wood joints.



CA Glue (Super Glue)

Instant bonding—excellent for tiny parts and hardware. Use with care!



Tacky Glue

Thick consistency, less dripping, good grab strength. Great for fabric and mixed materials.

Handmade vs. Purchased



Make Your Own

- Complete customization
- Greater realism
- Creative satisfaction
- Cost savings on large projects



Purchase

- Saves time
- Professional quality
- Ideal for beginners
- Ready to enjoy!



There is no right or wrong choice—it depends on your time, budget, skills, and what brings you joy!

Inspiration

From rustic farmhouse to elegant Victorian—build pieces that tell a story and reflect your style.



Final Thoughts

Start simple, focus on accurate scale, and practice clean finishing techniques. Over time, your miniatures will become increasingly realistic—and uniquely yours.

Happy building!



TIP: Measure twice, cut once—even in miniature!

