

Training to Be a Woodworker

Jeff Kostial

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. What skills does a woodworker or a carpenter need? How do you think they get their training?
2. What is a rut? Have you ever felt that you were stuck in a rut?

The pandemic has made me feel like I'm in a rut. Before the quarantine, I was enrolled in school to learn woodworking. I had never in my life been excited about going to school. School had always felt like a waste of time. But then I found this school, where I got to put things together with my hands. When I can use my hands, learning makes sense to me. I can see how what I am learning in class translates into practical and valuable skills.

When I am in quarantine, I am not able to work with my hands anymore. We do all of our classes and homework online. Instead of measuring real materials, making cuts, and using tools, we study math online. We also learn how to read blueprints. We learn woodworking from a textbook. If I had my own tools, I could do hands-on practice at home, but I don't.

I am trying to stay motivated and keep my sights on the future, but it's a daily struggle. I have to have vision and hope to see past the place I am in now. I know things will get better; I just hope it happens very soon.



Jeff Kostial is studying to become a woodworker in Greater West Town Training Partnership's Wood Products Manufacturing Program in Chicago, Illinois. He is 22 years old and has lived in Chicago his whole life. His goal is to become skilled in woodworking and carpentry so that he can provide for himself and help others who are in need. He says, "Since writing this, our school is back to in-person training, which I am very thankful for. We have taken the state-recommended precautions, and I feel it is a safe environment."



Take It Further

Read the articles on pp. 34-37. Describe the shifts in adult education due to the pandemic. Write your own essay about what is working for you with online learning and what is challenging.

For more career exploration, see the article and activity on pp. 56-57.