

TESTER



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Mr Universal



▼ The Unibase kit with its centring pins, nuts and bolts, a dummy bush and the Router Wizard

Anthony Bailey checks out the Unibase from Trend, probably the most universal guidebush device available

It isn't too often that someone devises a routing device that will cope with many situations. Usually what will work with one router won't be compatible with another or won't give quite the same result.

Now, Trend have produced the Unibase, a product meant to simplify and make universal the fitment of Trend guidebushes to any

router on the market. It is done with several aims. One aim is to encourage the use of Trend products, for example, when using the Unibase and guidebushes you know you can use their dovetail jig without problems.

The Trend range of guidebushes on their own is extensive even without special jigs, as guidebushes are handy things when making up templates to go with certain size cutters. ▶

"This simple gadget has more usability than you might think"



◀ The Unibase stops a small router dropping into a large hinge recess

has to be accurately aligned with the cutter axis, this automatically makes the external diameter concentric to it as well.

What, might you ask, is the use of that? Router bases have one flat face, two flat faces or are circular, but invariably cutter-to-base edge distance varies slightly from side to side or all round.

So, when you make a cut along a straight edge, the positioning of the router base against it will affect just how precisely the cutter will follow your intended line on the wood.

Not any more. Unibase sorts this one out and allows precise machining, even if the base turns as you move the router, just so long as you keep it pressed against the straight edge.

What you get

So what do you get in the Unibase box? The box itself is tough corrugated cardboard, worth keeping to protect the Unibase kit when not in use. On it is a list of routers and corresponding parts needed, plus the Trend range for handy reference.

The Unibase itself is tough PC/ABS plastic, 170mm in diameter, with a bewildering array of holes carefully

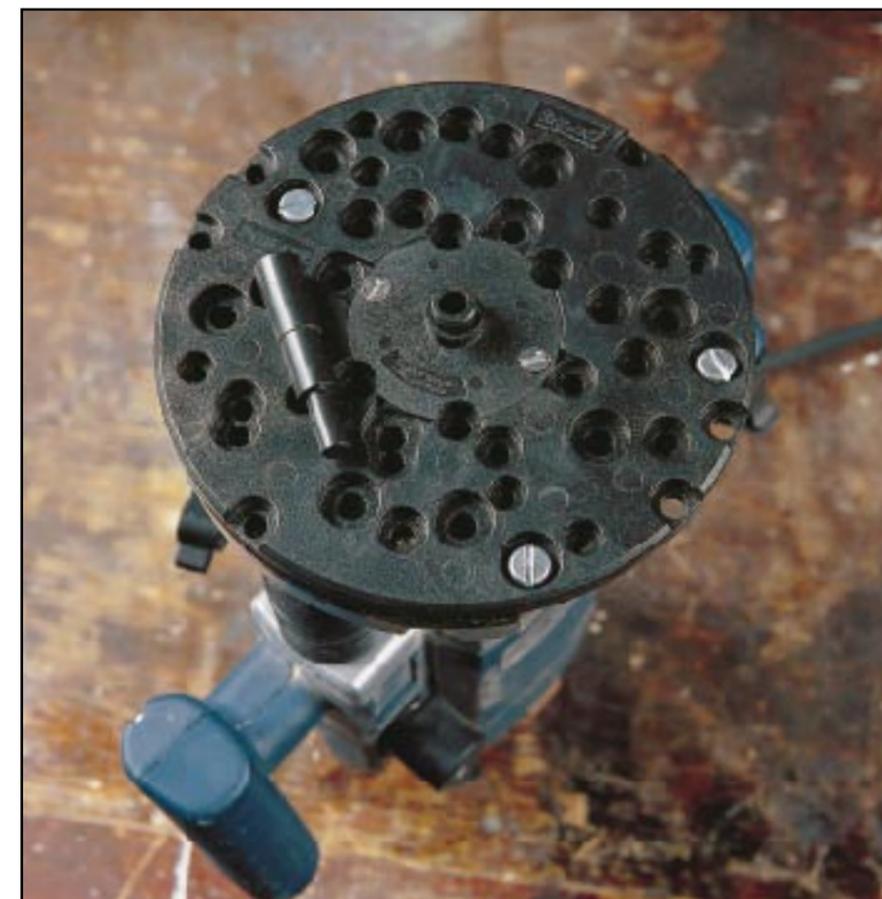
▶ The Unibase with its centring pin and a dummy guidebush in place

positioned to match any suitable router. There is a guidebush recess and two threaded brass inserts for fixing them in place.

The edge of Unibase is bevelled so it won't catch on uneven surfaces. A bag of machine screws and nuts to suit all fixing needs is supplied, along with a special 16mm overall diameter plastic setting up guidebush and two plastic centring pins, one for 8mm and 12mm collet sizes, the other for 1/4in and 1/2in collets. This allows accurate centering with any standard collet.

These plastic parts are only for setting up, proper guidebushes and cutters are then substituted. Also included is the handy Trend 3 in 1 Routing Wizard for working out template offsets for guidebushes, metric to imperial conversions and slotter or cutter-to-bearing diameters when doing bearing-guided work.

“Getting the setting up guidebush in position is a doddle”



Matching up

Just to make the point of how universal the Unibase is, here is a list of compatible makes, listing all the models would take up even more space! So, Trend, Atlas Copco, Bosch, Casals, DeWalt, Elu, Felisatto, Festo, Freud, Hitachi, Mafell, Makita, Metabo, Perles, Peugeot, Ryobi, Skil, Sparky, Wadkin.

I mention all these because this simple gadget has more usability than you might think. Ok, so you can fit almost any router. Then there's the fact that all Elu accessories, or any jigs you might have made for a perhaps now defunct Elu machine (this applies to DeWalt models and some other brands too) which need guidebushes, can be used with your new router – no problem.

The large external and small internal diameters of Unibase would suit small routers when you are looking for extra base support in freehand mode, particularly when you are oversailing an edge and your average router becomes unstable.

This also applies to hinge morticing, where the normal baseplate can drop into the recess you are creating if you aren't careful!

Lastly, there is the inherent concentricity of Unibase. Because the centre

▶ Exact cutter-to-fence distances are possible with Unibase



In use

I tried it on several different routers which it fitted without any trouble. There are one or two notable exceptions, such as the big Bosch machines, which Unibase will not fit.

Some cheap guidebushes that will fit may be slightly inaccurate, whereas the Trend ones are exact and the bush itself isn't simply pressed steel but a seamed collar giving a very square junction with its plate.

Inserting the plastic guide pins, and getting the setting up guidebush in position is a doddle. Then simply do a swap for the real items and you are ready to go. The hard, slightly textured plastic glides easily over the wood.

Conclusion

It's hard to tell just how long something will last with heavy use, but the Unibase is made from one of the toughest plastics and should stay accurate for a long time to come.

Being able to extend its use, both as a sub-base for awkward freehand work and its inherent concentricity once set up properly, extends its value well beyond the catalogue price of £14.70 inc VAT. ●

◀ A Trend guidebush and cutter installed after centring the Unibase