

## The Ten-Minute Slipcase

Instructions rewritten by Chris Johnson 2022

based on a 1980s workshop or Canberra TAFE course by Neale Wootton or John Tonkin.

**A slipcase is a cloth- or paper-covered box with one open edge into which the book is slipped with its spine exposed.**

The ten-minute slipcase is made from a single piece of lightweight card. It works in cooperation with the book itself, which acts as a firm support filling for the lightweight case.

### Tools:

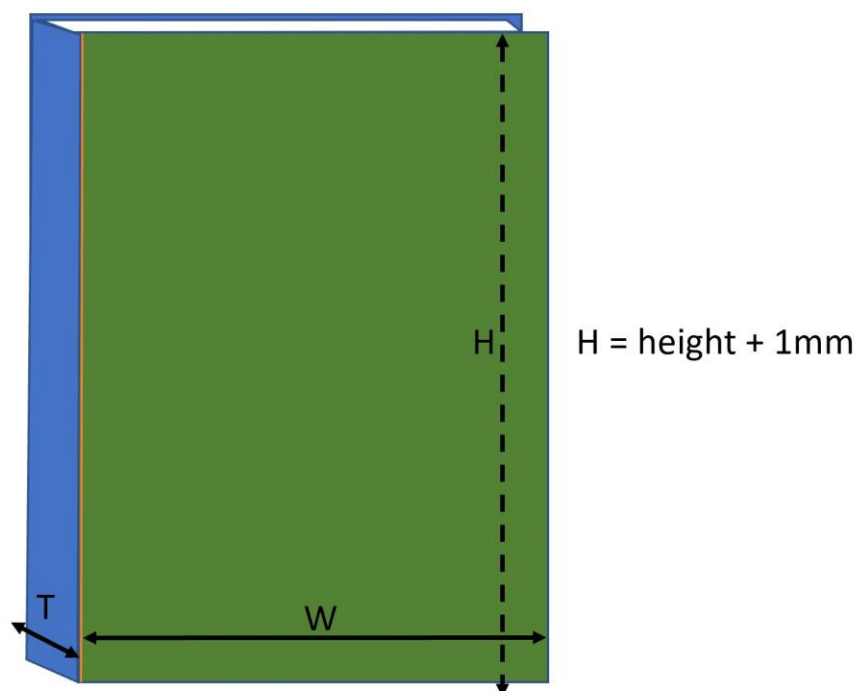
- a long strip of paper or large callipers for transferring measurements
- a (long) ruler
- bone folder (preferably long and narrow, with a point)
- knife
- cutting mat

### Measurements

T = thickness of the book (near the spine) + 2 mm

H = height of book + 1mm

W = width of book from shoulder to foreedge



T = thickness + 2mm  
*book maximum*

W = width  
*foreedge to shoulder*

## Material

Manilla card that can be easily folded both along and across the grain.

At least

$$\text{width of card} = 4 \times W + T - 20 \text{ mm}$$

$$\text{height of card} = H + 2 \times T$$

preferably direction of grain along the height (probably the short direction on the cut card)

## Method (see Diagrams on pages 5 & 6)

1. Trim the piece of card square to height =  $H + 2 \times T$
2. Scribe two long fold lines evenly spaced, a distance  $H$  apart along the full width (these lines are at a distance  $T$  from the long edges) (shown as dashed green lines). (The outer parts will form the head and tail *edge pieces* and the head and tail *tabs*.)
3. Trim the card to the width =  $T + 4 \times W - 20\text{mm}$ .
4. At a distance  $\frac{1}{2} T$  each side of centre line scribe lines for the full height across card, across the long scribe lines just made (this marks the slipcase's spine, which is  $T$  wide).
5. At a distance  $W$  further out from this line scribe a short line BETWEEN THE LONG SCRIBE LINES only. Do this on each side. (This marks the two ends of the card as *fold-in flaps* each with a width of  $W-10$  mm, inside the long scribe lines marking head and tail)
6. Cut out slim triangles (shown in red) into the spine side of the ends of the square of scribed lines at the head and tail of the spine. This forms a tapered tab at each end of the spine.
7. Cut slim triangles into the head and tail edges of the fold-in flaps from the outer edge into the short scribe line (shown in red). These cuts form the fold-in flaps with tapered edges.
8. Cut the head and tail pieces down to approximately 10 mm outside the short scribe line (shown in pink). It is desirable to leave this extra length to make eaves that will project over the ends of the book. This part will be trimmed to match the actual shape of the book later (indicated by the dark blue curved line).
9. Fold up the case– all scribed lines are valley folds. Fold the flaps in (there will no room to do this later on). Check rough fit around the book.  
If the case is the wrong size start again.  
(Alternatively, if the case appears to be too loose in thickness consider adding some packing inside the fold-in flaps; if it too loose in height consider packing by cutting another thickness of card to be glued inside head or tail. If it's too tight not much can be done unless you can trim the book... which usually puts the relative priority of valuable book and temporary slipcase the wrong way round.

10. (optional) Pare or sand the edges of the head and tail spine tabs (shown hatched).  
(optional) Pare or sand the long edge of one of the head and tail pieces. (not marked on the diagram). This will make for a better looking case.
11. Make the tail of the case.  
PVA one side of one of the tail pieces, leaving clean the side that will face inside the slipcase.  
(if you have done the optional paring of one piece: PVA the unpared piece on the side that will tuck below the pared piece, to leave the pared face on the outside of the slipcase).
  - PVA on the outer side of the tab at the tail of the spine.
  - Adhere the unglued face of the tab to the glued, inside piece.
  - Adhere the outer piece to the inner piece and over the tab.
  - Square up the two pieces, align the sides.
  - Rub down this construction carefully from the inside of the case onto the benchtop with a narrow bone folder.To help doing this you can cut a piece of board to fit the actual book thickness, or use the book itself covered in cling wrap, as a form to help to make the internal of the case right and to stick the pieces well.
12. Do step 10 again, for the head of the case.
13. Before the glue is fully dry try the book for fit: cover the book in cling wrap and slide it in to test for fit. This may help to make a little ease by expanding the case if it is too small, but if it is too large consider additional linings as above, or wrap the book inside the case. If it's too hard to fit... start again and allow more ease.
14. When the ends of the case are dry, insert the book.  
Mark the protruding tabs at the head and tail with a pencil to the shape of the book's spine, possibly allowing small additional overhanging eaves.  
Remove the book (for safety) and trim the tabs to shape with shears or a sharp blade.

### **Variations**

Decorate the card (paint, print, paste colour) before making the case.

### **Additional notes**

From Terence Uren's 10 min slipcase demonstration CCBG 11 Aug 2016 and Vicki Woolley's experience.

Use Canson card 0.4mm or 0.5mm, or use a quality coloured heavy paper such as Hahnemuhle.

To fully enclose the book and its spine make a nested pair of slipcases (make the inner first then use the encased book to measure for the outer).

To pare down the edge of the card tabs: use a French trimming knife, sharp boot knife, craft knife or scalpel (beware the blade can snap), or sandpaper by hand on a small block, or a Dremel miniature tool sander.

To use the book as a form to support the gluing of head and tail pieces, cover the book in cling wrap to protect it.

Use a rubber brayer for even rubbing down from the outside (or rubdown under a sheet of paper, to avoid shiny marks on the card)

(Rubbing down must be done lightly as the centre of the end pieces are unsupported even when the book is inside the case. For a thick book with a lot of space between the boards, consider cutting pieces of board to fill in the depth of the squares between the bookblock and the edges of the boards.

Add a chemise to the book to protect it when slipping in and out.

Add sculpted packing pieces inside the case to protect covers that have extrusions etc.

Both of these need to be accounted for in measuring the thickness of the case.

