



# Insight

Timber in its final drying stage before making



Fresh kiln-dried timber piled up on our timber racks

## Timber storage

Peter Sefton looks at his school's method of storing timber

The way we store and treat our timber is critical to making good quality furniture that will serve our customers well over time and it's important to ensure our timber is well dried and stable before we start our construction. We have a tried and tested system that works for us here at the School and we have very few timber movement issues after construction of the final piece.

### The process

The first stage of the process is careful timber selection and buying from reliable sources, ensuring the timber is either well air dried, kiln dried or best of all, a combination of both. The



The humidistat shows the store room at about 11% moisture level

majority of our timber has been kiln dried to about 13% moisture content, but is then often stored in outside drying sheds; the timber will tend to take in moisture again, to match the local humidity conditions. Remember, no matter where timber is stored, it will always reach equilibrium with its surroundings over time.

Once the fresh timber enters our workshop we put it to rest in our humidity controlled internal storeroom. This racked out room has a plumbed-in dehumidifier and a humidity Stat to constantly measure the levels within the room. The fresh timber is stacked on a cantilever scaffolding rack with sticks between each piece of timber to allow air movement. The thicker the stick the more airflow between the boards and the quicker final conditioning will occur.

The boards are entering the storeroom at maybe 15–18% moisture content but will normally reach the same level as our store area in a matter of a couple of months. The storeroom is normally constant at around 10% moisture level; 25mm thick boards should reach this level within a couple of weeks, a little longer for bigger sections. If possible we pre-cut our timber to rough sawn sizes before entering the drying room to speed up this drying process. After the boards



Our plumbed-in dehumidifier drying the timber

have been acclimatising to these internal conditions we will bring them closer to their finished size and re-stack them within our warmer workshop before final working to size. We find this gives us much better control over the end result and far fewer long-term problems with the furniture we craft. ■

### Peter Sefton

Peter Sefton is a well-known furniture maker who runs courses in fine woodworking, teaching and mentoring students at the Peter Sefton Furniture School. He also owns Wood Workers Workshop and he is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers.  
**Web:** [www.peterseftonfurniture.com](http://www.peterseftonfurniture.com)

