

Assembly Instructions	
Mandolin Rim set, A5	
Rev: 5/31/05	Pt# 300-A

To ensure maximum reliability and stability of the mandolin rim, we use a proprietary steam-bending method to coax the maple into its final shape. Through this method, the cells of the wood are actually bent into a smooth, new form rather than being ruptured as often occurs in the dry heat bending process. After steam bending, our rims are cured to a moisture content of 15% to 18% before they are removed from their forms to assure a reliable, life-long shape and structural consistency.



**Some things you should know about steam-bent rims:**

- 1) The steam bending process ensures that all of the fibers and cells of the wood are being reshaped and not stressed into their new form. In addition, steam bending assures that there are no permanent burn marks on the wood's surface.
- 2) The wood will not return to its original shape unless it is re-steamed or heat-bent.
- 3) If major re-shaping or bending is needed for any reason, traditional heat bending methods can be used (especially since the wood's cells are in their natural, but bent, structure).
- 4) Take special care to fit the butt seam (under the tailpiece). If the glued joint does not come

out to your satisfaction, you can rout a small channel into the joint and inlay a strip of binding or other material to create a decorative butt seam.

5) A body fixture should be used to hold the rim in its precise shape until the soundboard is glued on. Do not remove the rim assembly from the fixture until the soundboard is glued to the rim, block set, and lining.

6) The steam bending process may cause the curly grain to be obscured from view. Often this is caused by the surface of the wood not having a sheen after it is bent. The curly grain will again be apparent when the rim is scraped or sanded.\*

7) When finishing and coloring the instrument, the use of traditional "contrast building" techniques will bring out the curly figure. For more information on building grain contrast during finishing, consult *The Ultimate Bluegrass Mandolin Construction Manual*, Hal Leonard Publishing, Milwaukee, WI.

8) Some small fibers of wood may raise on sharp bends (especially in the case of the A5 rim in the headblock region). This is normal and can be sanded away. (We will not ship defective rim sets.)

9) You might want to fabricate a sanding block as shown on the reverse side, using 60- or 80-grit sandpaper to sand the rim, kerfed lining, and block set flush to each other after they have been glued up in the body fixture.

The sandpaper can be glued to the sanding block using rubber cement (apply to both faces, allow cement to dry, press together). Although

---

\* For matching purposes, we occasionally check the grain by scraping or sanding along the rib's outer surfaces of the pieces.

this photo is of an F-style fixture and rim set, the sanding block idea is identical for the A5.

