

I recently embarked on a little DIY woodworking project to upgrade our pantry from the stock wire shelves into custom wrap-around wood shelving. While I was at it, I added an additional level to cellar some adult beverages!



We started with your stock builder grade pantry shelving, which works mostly fine, but we have notoriously had an impossible time using the floor-level space because it didn't provide enough clearance for things like dog food containers.

We wanted the new and improved edition to have a bit more clearance, and look at little less "standard" edition.



To start, we gutted the wire shelving and had to give the pantry some much needed TLC.

I'll skip over the redundancy of ripping plywood into the appropriate sizes, and the countless iterations of painting, sanding, and polyurethane to get to the final installation.

However, one of the design elements we struggled with for weeks before moving on this project was whether or not to explicitly divide the shelves vertically up the middle for additional support. The alternative would have been essentially "floating" shelves, which we opted against because we tend to store quite a bit of things on the heavier side like rice, beans, oils, etc.

To that end, I got to use my dado router jig to build a dado shelf divider which reminded me countless times why I need a dado stack and a new table saw!



After this, it was a pretty straight forward retrofit of the shelves into a non-square pantry interior.

We wanted cleats to brace the back and side of each shelf. An interior wrapper to create a pseudo-U shaped interior shelving (see below) to wrap the entire interior of the pantry for some extra storage of goodies.



Above, you'll see the back wall cleats fully installed and the matching dado shelf that each shelf would fit into. After doing some [torture and weight test](#) math on the dados and the cleats for these shelves, we're confidently able to put nearly 100lbs of weight on each 1/2 shelf (more than we're ever going to come anywhere near hitting).



And finally, a fully installed shelving system with built in secret compartment for all those wonderful brews that do best after aging!