

How to install casing

Materials needed include:

- Utility knife
- Tape measure
- Miter saw or miter box
- Level
- Flat bar
- Hammer or nail gun
- Finish nails
- Nail set
- Wood glue
- Safety glasses
- Moulding

Begin by removing the existing casing if installed.

1. Using a utility knife, cut along the joint where the edge of the casing intersects the jamb of the opening. Repeat this process where the opposite edge of the casing and wall intersect. This will loosen any paint or caulk and prevent damage to the sheetrock and jamb.
2. Starting at the bottom, insert your flat bar between the wall and the moulding. Gently pry the moulding away from the wall being careful not to damage the sheetrock (Tip: use a putty knife in between the flat bar and the wall to protect the sheetrock). Continue along the length of the moulding pulling it away from the wall until you can remove the entire piece. Continue around the room until all casing is removed.
3. Make a sketch of your room. Measure the length and width of each opening and record that measurement on your sketch. Add those numbers together to determine the total lineal feet of moulding you will need to purchase.
4. Add 10% to that total for waste and miter joints.

Choose an opening to begin installing your new casing. It is best to start with the largest opening first and work your way to the smallest. If you cut a piece too short, it can be used on a smaller opening.

*Tip: Before beginning, cut templates for left hand and right hand miter cuts. Each opening will have a left hand and right hand side. This will save time and reduce errors in setting your miter angles as you begin cutting each piece of moulding.

Installing your casing

5. Begin by marking the desired reveal on the door or window jamb. The reveal is the margin between the edge of the casing and the jamb. This measurement is typically 1/8 of an inch or the same as the thickness of the moulding where it meets the jamb.
6. Cut your first piece to length. Measure the side of the door jamb. Add the desired reveal distance to the height and mark your casing on the inside edge.
 - a. Cut the top end of the moulding at a 45 degree angle. This will leave the outside edge of the casing longer than the inside. The shorter side will equal your measurement. Remember, you will be cutting a left hand and right hand side. Cut the piece a little long and trim as needed to get the best fit.
 - b. Repeat this process for the opposing side.
7. Cut your header or the piece of casing that will be installed horizontally across the top of your opening. Measure the distance between the jambs. This time you will need to add the desired reveal distance twice to the width of the opening. If you are installing moulding on all four sides of an opening, repeat this process for the bottom piece.
 - a. Cut a 45 degree angle on one side of the moulding. The inside of the casing will need to be the short end. Mark your distance from the short end to the opposite side of the casing. This will need to be the short end of the next 45 degree cut. You should end up with a left hand and right hand cut on the casing where the inside edge is longer than the outside edge on both ends.
8. Once your cuts are made, dry fit the moulding around the opening. It may be necessary to trim the legs and header to achieve tight miter joints. Adjust as needed and then nail into place.
 - a. Nail the top piece of casing in place. Be sure to line the inside edge of the casing up with your reveal marks. Use a level to assure that you nail the moulding in place straight across the top/bottom of the opening. Nail through the casing into the jamb of the opening then secure the outside edges of the casing by nailing through the sheetrock into the wall studs. It may be necessary to use longer finish nails for this step.
 - b. Continue your installation by nailing up the sides using the same process. Line the side piece of moulding up with your reveal marks and use a level to keep each side plumb. Nail through the casing into the jamb of the opening then secure the outside edges of the casing by nailing through the sheetrock into the wall studs. It may be necessary to use longer finish nails for this step.
 - c. Using a nail set, set all the nail heads so they do not protrude past the face of the moulding.
 - d. Use wood putty to conceal nail holes and any other irregularities or voids in the moulding.

Casing can also be installed using corner blocks and plinths. A corner block is installed at the top of the opening. It takes the place of the miter joint where the vertical horizontal pieces of moulding intersect. A plinth block is installed at the bottom of the vertical piece next to the floor. The bottom of the casing will end on top of the plinth and the base board will butt into the side. Using blocks eliminates the need for mitered corners simplifying the installation. Only square cuts are needed as the moulding will be installed between each block.