

How to install Chair Rail Moulding

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 chair rail if installed.

1. Using a utility knife, cut along the joints where the chair rail and wall intersect. This will loosen any paint or caulk and prevent damage to the sheetrock.
2. Starting in a corner, 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 chair rail is removed.
3. Make a sketch of your room. Measure the length of each wall and record that measurement on your sketch. Add those numbers together to determine the total lineal feet of chair rail you will need to purchase.
4. Add 10% to that total for waste and miter joints (Tip: deduct the width of any doorways, windows or cased openings to get an accurate total).

Choose a wall to begin installing your new chair rail. Measure the desired height of your chair rail from the floor to a point on the wall. A common chair rail height is 36 inches. Depending upon your specific style and needs, the height could vary. Mark your desired height across the wall in several places. Using a level as a guide, mark a straight line across the wall for reference when you begin installing your chair rail.

5. Cut your first piece to length. Be sure to cut it a little long to allow for your miter joint.
 - a. If you are installing a piece of moulding between two doors, windows or cased openings, each end will need to be cut straight to fit tight against the casing.
 - b. If you are beginning with an inside corner, cut the moulding at a 45 degree angle across the face of the moulding. This cut will make the back side of the moulding that goes along the wall longer than the face of the moulding.

c. If you are beginning with an outside corner, cut the moulding at a 45 degree angle across the back side of the moulding. This will make the face of the moulding longer than the back side that goes against the wall.

d. It may be necessary to splice two pieces of chair rail together if you have a long wall. To do this, cut opposing 30 degree angles across the moulding. Splice them together (preferably over a wall stud) and nail into place.

6. Once your finishing cuts are made, nail your chair rail in place. Begin in the corner, nailing into a wall stud at the top and bottom of the moulding. Use a stud finder to locate the studs before you nail. Using a level to keep your chair rail straight across the wall, finish installing the piece by nailing into the wall studs along the entire length of the moulding.

7. Continue with the next adjoining piece by making the appropriate cut and repeating until your job is complete.

Tip: Make templates of inside and outside corner cuts before you begin. Each corner will have a left hand and right cut. This will aid in setting the miter angle on your saw as you cut each piece. It will also prevent you from making the wrong cut and saving you time as you go.