

DIY Cabinets RTA | Free Guide To DIY Cabinet Measurements

Introduction

Setting up kitchen cabinets might seem like a big task, but don't worry! You can do it yourself with clear instructions, enough time, and some basic tools.

To kickstart your DIY cabinet installation project, we've crafted a straightforward guide complete with step-by-step instructions. By following these simple steps, you'll not only finish the task but also take pride in your work upon completion.

Our easy-to-follow cabinet installation guide covers everything from essential tools to any additional items you may require, along with tips on preparing the space before you dive into the installation process. You're on your way to transforming your space with your newfound skills!

Tools & Supplies you might need to assemble and install your cabinets:

Cabinet Layout, Cordless Drill, Tape Measure, 5' level, Pry Bar, Ladder, Clamps, Pin Nailer, Extension Cord, Drill Bits, Table Saw, Jig Saw, Circular Saw, Miter Box, Stud Finder, Framing Square, Wood shims, 2 x 4's, Finish Nails, #10 x 2 ½ Pan Head Screws, #8 x 2 ½ Trim Head Screws, Pencil, Hammer, Screw Drivers.

Step #1 Review your new cabinets

Upon the arrival of your cabinets, carefully unpack the packaging and examine each component to verify that you have received the correct sizes, color, and style as specified in your order. Take a count of all shelves, trim pieces, filler strips, and hardware components, including brackets, drawer glides, and hinges, to guarantee the presence of all necessary parts. Before proceeding with the installation, you'll need to assemble your cabinets.

Step #2 Put together your ready-to-assemble (RTA) cabinets.

The initial assembly of your first cabinet may require 35-40 minutes. Subsequent cabinets should take approximately 15-20 minutes each to put together.

Step #3 Go through the cabinet layout step by step.

-> Identify any high areas on the floor

As a house settles, the floor might tilt a bit. For a level kitchen setup, find the highest point on the floor and start installing from there. Use shims under cabinets to make them level, which is easier than cutting them to match the floor.

To find the floor's high point, use an 8-foot board against the wall with a level on top. Shim the low end for a level reading and mark the floor. Repeat this process 24 inches from the wall, running the level parallel to where the front cabinet edge ends. Compare high points on cabinet fronts and backs, using the higher point as your reference.

-> Locate any vertical bumps on the wall

Place your level against the wall vertically. Check for a straight alignment or nothing protruding from top to bottom. Move around the room, marking the wall where it's highest or where the level is even at the top and bottom. Measure from the highest point on the wall to where both upper and lower cabinet ends will be, such as next to the stove, ensuring alignment. This way, your cabinets will stay straight and level along the wall.

-> Locate any horizontal protrusions or bumps on the wall

Put your level against the wall horizontally. Check for a straight alignment or nothing protruding from side to side. Move around the room, marking spots on the wall where the level rocks due to bumps. Use shims around those areas to keep the cabinet straight when installing it.

-> Identify the elevated point on the ceiling

This step is particularly important, especially if your cabinets extend all the way to the ceiling. Begin by measuring down from the ceiling to identify any areas where it may be higher. Take a tour around the room and mark these spots where the ceiling is elevated. Following these steps will ensure that all your cabinet lines are perfectly level and square by the time you're done.

Step #4 Make a mark on the wall to indicate where the upper edge of the base cabinets will end

Starting from the highest point on the floor, measure and mark where the back of your base cabinets will be. Create a level line that goes all around the room where the base cabinets will go. Before putting in the base cabinets, set them up without securing them, beginning with the corner one.

Arrange the other cabinets next to each other based on your kitchen design. Mark and label on the wall where each cabinet will be without securing them. Remember that the front face frames of the cabinets extend beyond the sides, creating a space at the back when they meet. Keep this space in mind when marking, and use a shim if needed for a flush fit. Check measurements for openings and door directions.

Decide whether to install walls or base cabinets first, depending on your preference. To start the installation, screw a support strip on the marked line for stability.

Step #5 Start by installing the upper wall cabinets

Start by measuring down from the highest part of the ceiling to find the height for the back of your upper wall cabinets. Then, mark points to the right and left of your first mark and connect them with a level, horizontal line. Repeat this process around the whole room where the upper cabinets will go.

Mark and label where each upper cabinet should be on the wall. Check your layout and ensure the cabinets are level. Organize the upper wall cabinets around the room and aim to install them first. This way, the base cabinets won't be in your way while you're putting up the upper cabinets.

Step #6 Locate the wall studs

Use a stud finder to locate studs and screw the cabinets securely into them. Make pencil marks near each stud's center, extend straight lines with a level, and mark the cabinet's back where it meets the stud. Drill pilot holes at those marks. Alternatively, use painter's tape to mark studs without marking the walls directly.

Step #7 Place your ledger on the wall.

Attach wood to each stud for cabinet support. For wall stud installation, use 3-inch #10 screws or special washer-head screws. If mounting in drywall without a stud, use toggle bolts with pre-drilled holes, and secure cabinets to an adjacent cabinet.

Step #8 Start installing the corner cabinet.

Start in a corner for assembling kitchen cabinets. Remove doors, mark studs on the cabinet, and secure it to the wall with appropriate hardware. Use a level, shim if needed, and set it on a ledger for support. After installing corner cabinets, work outward to install the rest.

Step #9 Connect the cabinets

After securing the first cabinet, use C-clamps to connect the next one to it. Adjust the clamps until the second cabinet is level and flush with the first. Insert wood shims if needed. Once level, use the clamp to hold the cabinets, and drill three pilot holes (top, middle, and bottom) through the side of the face frame of the second cabinet. Attach it to the first cabinet using 2 1/2-inch, #8 screws, and countersink the screws for a neat appearance. Always connect cabinets through the face frame, not the side panels.

Step #10 Put in the remaining cabinets.

Connect cabinets in order without tightening screws. Drill 3/16-inch pilot holes at stud locations on the cabinet's back panel. Use #8 x 2 1/2" trim head screws to secure cabinets together and attach wall cabinets to adjacent ones. Secure the cabinet to the wall stud with a 3-inch, #10 screw, using a shim for leveling if needed. After connecting all cabinets, tighten mounting screws against the back of the cabinet, avoiding damage. Always check that all cabinets remain level after tightening.

Step #11 Adjust drawers

Once all cabinets are hung and doors are replaced, your kitchen cabinet installation is nearly done. However, you might still need to level the drawer fronts.

To do this, loosen the screws holding the drawer glides to the cabinet frame. Adjust the drawer vertically for alignment and then tighten the screws. Drill a 1/8-inch pilot hole below the second hole of the drawer glide and secure the drawer with a 5/8-inch, #8 screw. Check the alignment of cabinet drawers and doors from the front.

To install handles and pulls on your cabinet doors, start by drilling holes in them. Before you begin drilling, double-check and measure to ensure that all handles on the doors are aligned properly. Once you've confirmed the alignment, drill a small 1/8-inch pilot hole, and then use a 5/8-inch, #8 screw to securely fasten the handles or pulls in place.

Step #12 Repeat the process for base cabinets

Install the corner cabinet first, marking studs and using a ledger for support. Ensure it's level and flush with the wall. Continue with other cabinets, securing them together with C-clamps. Adjust and drill three pilot holes in the face frame for attachment, using 2 1/2-inch, #8 screws. Countersink for a neat appearance. Always connect cabinets at the face frame, not through the side panels.

Step #13 Complete the installation of the remaining base cabinets.

Before tightening any screws, connect all the cabinets in order. Locate the studs on the cabinet's back panel and drill a 3/16-inch hole through it into the stud. Use a 3-inch, #10 screw to mount the cabinet onto the wall stud, adjusting with a shim if necessary. Once all cabinets are attached, tighten the mounting screws against the back of the cabinet, avoiding driving the screw head into the cabinet's surface. Always double-check that all cabinets are level after tightening.

Step #14 Adjust the drawers of the base cabinet

Once you've set up your base cabinets and put back the doors, you might need to make sure the drawer fronts are level. To do this, loosen the screws holding the drawer glides to the cabinet frame, adjust the drawer vertically to align it, and then tighten the screws. Drill a 1/8-inch hole below the drawer glide's second hole and secure the drawer with a 5/8-inch, #8 screw. Check the alignment of the cabinet drawers and doors from the front.

Make holes in the doors of the cabinets to install your handles and pulls. Before you start drilling, measure twice to make sure all handles on the doors are aligned. Then, drill a small 1/8-inch hole and use a 5/8-inch, #8 screw to secure the handles or pulls.

Follow these instructions for installing kitchen cabinets, keeping in mind that they are based on standard methods. However, before you begin, take a moment to read the manufacturer's specific directions for your cabinets. Following their recommended installation method is key, as they may include additional hardware or techniques not covered here. Happy installing!