

Installing Lap Siding

There are several types of horizontal board siding applications, such as clapboard, tongue and groove, bevel, and shiplap, but the most popular is lap siding, which is the project we're showing here. The installation is fairly straightforward, with each course overlapping the underlying row and covering up the nailing. We're using a measuring gauge that's pre-set to give each course of siding the exact same amount of overlap.

Before installing wood siding, make sure it's acclimated to your environment so it can expand or shrink prior to being nailed in place. For our project, we're using fiber cement siding, which offers the look and texture of wood but doesn't rot or crack. The application is basically the same, although fiber cement can be more difficult to nail (you may want to pre-drill holes) and requires a carbide-tipped blade for cutting. Wear a respirator when cutting fiber cement since it contains silica, which can cause lung disease.

Store siding in a flat position, and keep it off the ground and covered until ready for use. When carrying the siding, make sure it doesn't bend and crack. Having a helper makes this job much easier. The siding panels need to be nailed to studs, so it's critical for the marks on the house-wrap to be aligned with the wall studs. Cut the panels face down to avoid marring or damaging the faces.

If the siding is not yet primed, apply a coat of primer before installing. Also apply primer to cut edges during the installation process. Some wood and fiber cement siding need to be painted after they're installed. Although you'll have a paint job on your hands when the project is finished, the upside is you'll have the opportunity to change the color of your siding whenever you want by applying a new coat of paint. Other sidings are available in colors that don't require painting, and the seams are caulked with a matching colored caulk.

Everything You Need

Tools: tape measure, circular saw, caulk gun, chalk line, paint brush, combination saw blade (for wood), carbide-tipped saw blade (for fiber cement), 4-ft. level, measuring gauge, T-bevel.

Materials: $\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ " lath, siding and trim, 6d corrosion-resistant nails, 2" corrosion-resistant siding nails, flexible caulk, primer.



How to Install Lap Siding



1 Cover the exterior walls with housewrap so the stud marks fall on the studs (see pages 114 to 115). Starting at the lowest corner of the house, snap a level line at the bottom of the wall where the siding will begin. The siding should cover the sill plate; but stay above grade and concrete surfaces.



2 Install a corner trim board flush with the outside wall and flush with the chalk line at the bottom. Keep nails 1" from each end and $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the edges. Drive two nails every 16". Overlap a second trim board on the adjacent side, aligning the edge with the face of the first board, and nail in place.



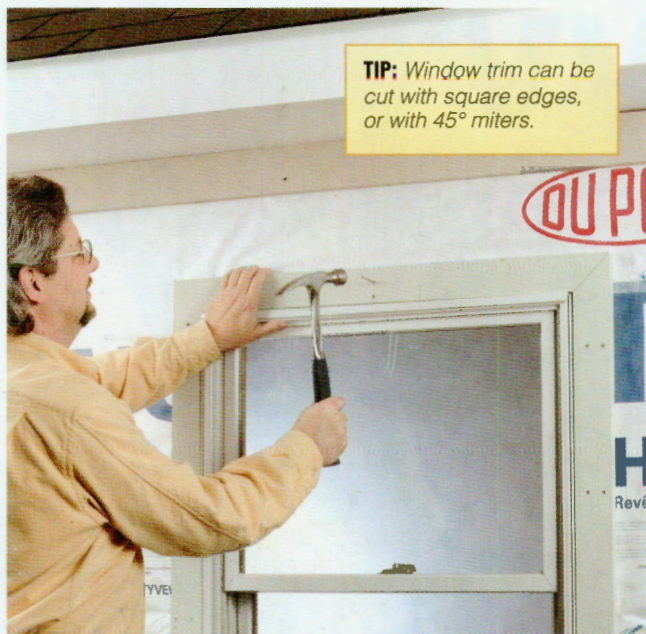
3 When two or more corner trim pieces are needed to complete a wall, cut a 45° bevel on the end of each board. Apply primer to the cut ends. Install the first board so the bevel faces away from the house. Place the top piece over the first board, aligning the bevels. Stagger seams between adjacent sides.



4 Place a corner trim board in an inside corner. Drive nails every 16".

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How to Install Lap Siding (continued)



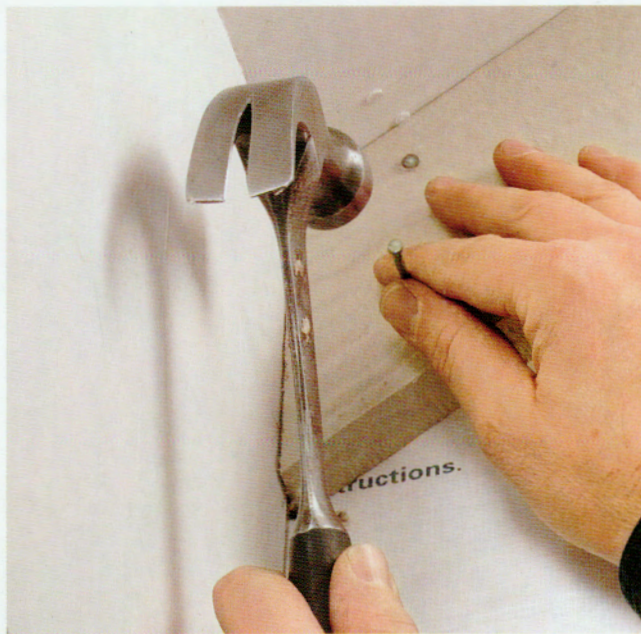
5 Measure and cut trim to fit around a window. Install trim along the bottom of the window first, then measure and cut trim to fit along the sides, flush with the bottom edge of the first trim piece and $\frac{1}{8}$ " above the top of the drip cap. Measure and cut trim to fit over the window, flush with the outside edges of the side trim. Drive two nails in the trim pieces every 16". Repeat for each window and door.



Option: Rather than install the trim first, wait until after the siding is in place. Then, nail the trim directly over the siding. Make sure the nails are long enough to penetrate through the siding and sheathing and into the studs by at least 1".



6 On horizontal eaves, install frieze boards directly under the soffits. Butt the frieze boards against the corner trim, and drive two nails every 16" into studs.



7 Use a T-bevel to determine the angle on the gable end of the house. Cut this angle on the end of a frieze board, and install under the soffits.



TIP: Rather than buying lath, rip panels of wood or fiber cement siding to 1½"-wide strips and use them as lath.

8 Install lath along the base of the walls. Align the bottom edge of the lath with the chalk line and nail in place, using 6d nails. Keep the lath ⅛" from the corner trim.



9 Cut the first siding panel so it ends halfway over a stud when the other end is placed ⅛" from a corner trim board. Apply primer to the cut end. Align the siding with the bottom edge of the lath. Keep a ⅛" gap between the siding and corner trim. Nail the panel at each stud location, 1" from the top edge, using siding nails.



10 Measure and cut the next panel so it reaches the opposite corner or falls at the midpoint of a stud. Set the panel over the lath, keeping a ⅛" gap between the first panel and the second panel. Nail the panel ⅜" from the seam edge and at every stud.



11 Set the measuring gauge to give the panels a minimum of 1¼" overlap. Place the second row of panels over the first, using the measuring gauge to set the amount of overlap. Offset seams by at least one stud. Repeat this procedure for subsequent rows. Check every five or six rows for level. Make adjustments in small increments. Cut or notch panels as necessary to fit around protrusions in the walls.

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How to Install Lap Siding (continued)



12 For windows, slide the siding panel against the bottom window trim. Mark the panel $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the outside edges of the side trim. Place a scrap piece of siding next to the window trim at the proper overlap.

Mark the depth of the cut $\frac{1}{8}$ " below the bottom trim. Transfer the measurement to the siding panel and cut it to fit. Install the cutout panel around the window. Do the same at the top of the window.



Option: Siding 12" or wider, or siding nailed 24" on center, needs to be face nailed. The siding is overlapped a minimum of $1\frac{1}{4}$ " and nailed $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" from the bottom. Drive the nail through both planks of siding into the stud, using corrosion-resistant siding nails.



13 When installing the siding over a roof line, keep the panels 1" to 2" above the roofing. Use a T-bevel to determine the angle of the roof line, and transfer the angle to siding. Cut the panels to fit. Place the bottom edge of the siding over the roof flashing and nail the panel in place.



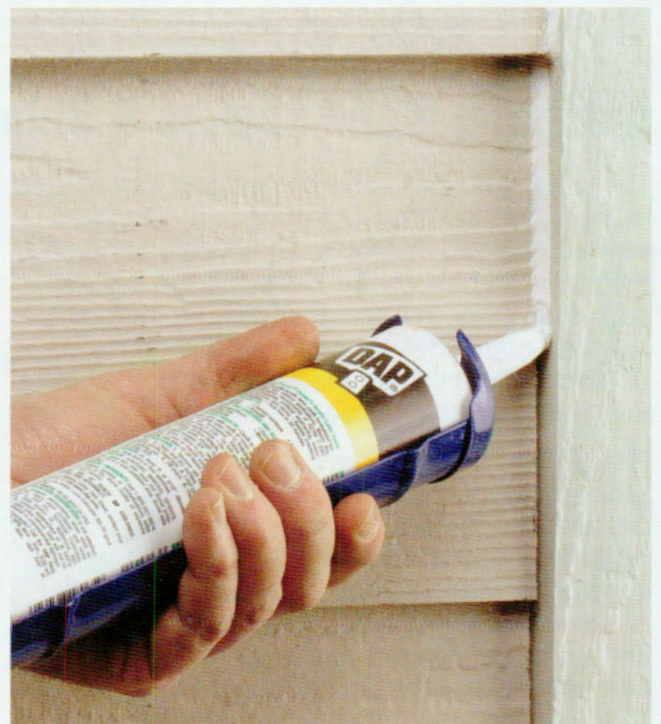
14 Rip the last row of panels to fit $\frac{1}{8}$ " below the frieze boards under the horizontal eaves. Nail the panels in place.



15 Use a T-bevel to determine the angle of the roof line on the gable ends of the house. Transfer the angle to the panels, and cut them to fit.



16 Keep the panels $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the rake boards, and nail them in place along the gable end.



17 Fill all gaps between panels and trim with flexible, paintable caulk. Paint the siding as desired (see Exterior Painting, beginning on page 198).