

Installing Deck Boards

OVERVIEW



Introduction

Now that the deck frame and joists are in place, you can install the decking, or floor, of your deck. You have a variety of materials to choose from - pressure-treated wood, redwood, cedar or even artificial wood. Your choice will be based on your preference for aesthetics versus ease of maintenance.

BEFORE YOU START...

🕒 SKILL LEVEL & TIME TO COMPLETE

Time to complete this project depends on the size of the deck and the level of help available, the times listed here are for two people on a 10'x 30' deck with the house defining two sides of the deck.

- Beginner - 2 to 3 days
- Intermediate - 1 to 2 days
- Advanced - about 1 day

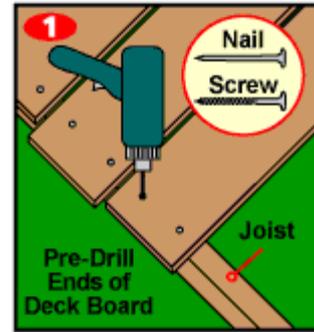
✓ HELPFUL TIP Install decking boards with the bark side up. Boards can "cup" away from the bark side. This will enable the water to run off the boards.

✓ HELPFUL TIP Decking boards should be about 1/8" apart to allow for the boards to swell and shrink. This also allows for water drainage through the deck.

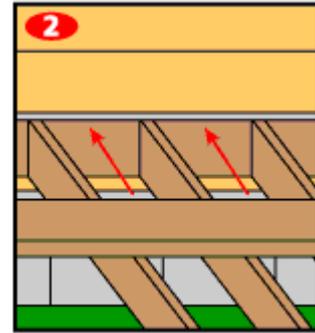
✗ COMMON MISTAKE Make sure that butt joints in the decking do not occur on the same joist for 2 consecutive rows. Make sure they are staggered for both aesthetic and structural reasons.

STEPS

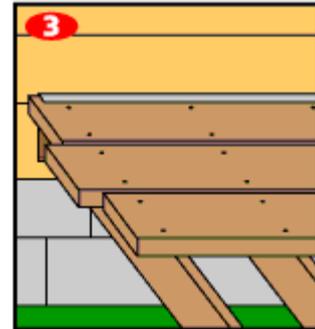
1. When installing the decking boards, you can use screws or galvanized nails. Use 2 screws or nails where a decking board and joist intersect. For both nails and screws, pre-drill the ends of the boards to avoid splitting.



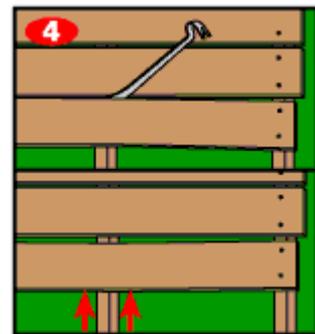
2. The first piece of decking should be the straightest board in the stack. It will go right up against the house. Cut it to length and slide it up against the house. Nail it or screw it in place.



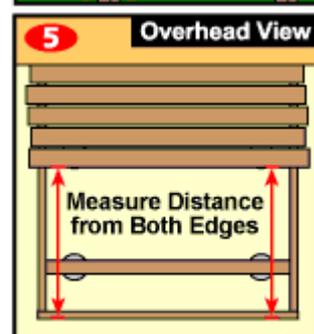
3. Lay each row of decking in place and nail or screw it to the joists. Maintain a consistent 1/8" gap in between row. For boards around the edges of the deck, allow the boards to fly a few inches past the deck. Later you will cut them all at once when they are all installed.



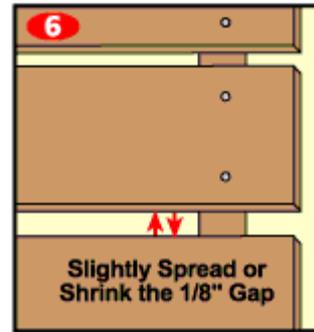
4. If a board is warped, screw it in place at one end, 1/8" away from the previous row. Move to the next joist. If the gap is less than 1/8", use a pry bar in between the new board and the last row to spread the boards apart. If the gap is greater than 1/8", have a helper grab the free end of the board and push it into the correct position. Screw the board in place.



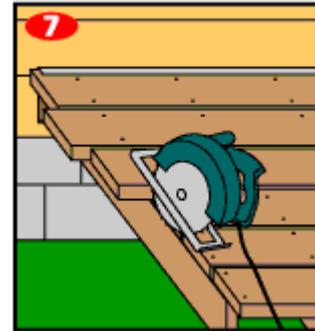
5. Every few rows, measure the distance remaining on both edges of the deck. Make sure the distance is the same. If one dimension is longer, you can get the rows of decking parallel to the end of the deck by spreading the gap at one end over the next row or two.



6. When you are about 4 to 6 feet from the end of the deck, check the remaining distances. Divide this distance by the width of the decking boards plus 1/8". You want to end the decking with a full width board if possible. Over the last 10 or so rows, you can slightly spread or shrink the 1/8" for a perfect fit.



7. Once all the deck boards are installed, you can cut off the ends that extended over the edge of the deck. Snap a chalk line and use a circular saw to cut all the boards in one step. Where the circular saw can't reach, use a hand saw in corners or next to your house.



SHOP LIST

Materials Needed

- Decking Boards
- Screws
- Silicone Caulk

Tools Needed

- Circular Saw
- Hammer
- Pry Bar
- Square
- Screw gun
- Drill bits
- Tape measure