

DOORS 101:

Whether or not you need one door or want to replace all of your doors, there are pre-installation steps you can take to simplify the chore and the following information will go a long way to making your door shopping much easier. The staff at Extras will do all they can to help you, but please understand, it is a matter of searching through the doors to get what you need and you may need to come back a few times to get it all done.

INTERIOR OR EXTERIOR

This makes a big difference and, although they can be interchangeable, it is not always a good idea because interior doors are 1-3/8" thick and exterior doors are 1-3/4" thick. Further, each are made for the individual applications (insulated for exterior doors) and hollow core interior doors are not suitable for an exterior location.

Doors are manufactured in various materials. Exterior doors can be solid core, metal, fiberglass and/or wood. Check your county's code requirements; and, depending on where you are, if there is an inspector involved, you will need a fire rated door. [Google it!] Interior doors can be hollow core (the operative word is "HOLLOW"), solid core and/or wood. The choice of materials is up to you, but keep in mind, solid core and/or wood doors will last longer and wear better.

SLAB OR PRE-HUNG?

Check your door jamb, which is the frame in which the door hangs. If it is in bad shape, be prepared to start from scratch with a pre-hung door (see below) or to rebuild the door jamb. Folks, there really is not any point in putting a new door into an old, crummy jamb. If your jambs are in good shape, you will only need a "slab" which can be hung in the existing jamb. A jamb can be built for slab doors, as well, and Extras has everything you need: jambs, door stop, casing, hinges, knobs, and thresholds. Some doors are bored (hole cut for the doorknob) and mortised (routed for hinges), some are half-bored for a sliding closet door, and some have no bore and no mortise, meaning you will have to do this before the door can be hung (we do **not** bore and/or mortise doors at Extras). **Remember:** slabs which are **not** bored and mortised can be used for barn doors.

A "pre-hung" door is a door that is already assembled in the jamb ready to be installed. 9 out of 10 contractors will want your doors pre-hung because it is a lot easier and less work. Most contractors will have the knowledge and the tools required to do the work and if the jambs are in good shape they really do not need to be replaced. You will, however, be paying the labor to have the doors hung and in the contractor's defense there may be time and labor constraints which prohibit the extra work.

Depending on you, your budget, your time, your desire to learn, and if you want to be a true DIY-er, there are numerous U-Tube videos that have step-by-step instructions for all levels. It is not rocket science and any of this can be done without all the fancy tools. But, if you are a true DIY-er, you will want all of the fancy tools, or at least some of them!

SIZE

Not all doors are created equal so get out the tape measure and measure the following:

Height: 80" or "six-eight" (6 foot, 8 inches) is a standard sized door that most all of us have in our homes. This can vary but if it does it is usually 79" and change. If you have an older home, door sizes can really vary, in which case you will probably need to chop a few inches off a SOLID core door to get a proper fit.

Width: Generally speaking, doors come in widths from 12" up to 48" but chances are good you are working within the 18", 24", 28", 30", 32", and 36" range. Here again they may be $\pm 1/4$ " smaller, so what we call a 24" door may be 23-3/4" or thereabouts. You do have a tiny bit of wiggle room but not much more than an 1/8" or so.

HINGES

Replacing existing slabs with pre-mortised doors means you will need to know the location and radius of your hinges. Most doors these days have 3 hinges per 6'8" door. Back in the old days, when hollow core doors were created, they only had 2 hinges. So, if your house is from the pre-1970's you will need to be prepared for this. Measure from the top of the door to the top of the first hinge, the second hinge and so on. It is a good idea to draw a little diagram as it will help you once you start looking for your doors and hinges. The radius is the shape of the hinge – 5/8" is rounded; 1/4" is more square with rounded corners; and, "square" is square and really old! You will not find any doors with a square mortise.

SWING

The swing means the way the door swings in the jamb into the room or out in the hallway. Most doors will swing **into** a room and swing **out** if it is for a closet or boiler/utility/laundry room. The hinges have pins, that is the little part of the hinge that sticks out. Stand on the hinge pin side of the door (in the room if it swings in, out in the hallway if it swings out). Close the door, back up against the door and whichever hand hits the hinge pin is the **SWING** of the door. So, if your right hand touches the pins, it is a right swing door and vice versa.

These instructions apply to 6'8" doors, but the same theory can be applied to 7' or 8' doors though, typically, there will be 4 hinges rather than 3.

This concludes DOORS 101, good luck with installing your new doors!