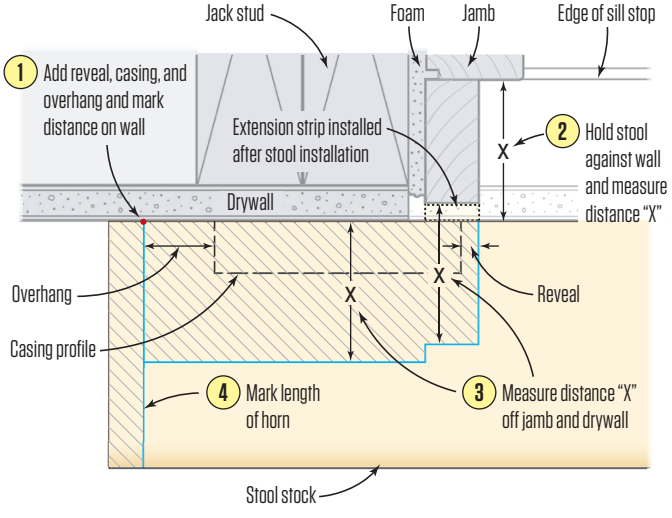
BY ROE OSBORN

Fitting a Window Stool

Stool Layout Sequence



Add the reveal, casing width, and overhang, and mark the end of the horn on the wall. Hold a rough length of stock against the wall and measure in how deep the stool needs to be to meet the window. Measure out that distance to plot the cut lines. In this example, a small strip will be added to the factory jamb extensions to make them flush with the drywall.

Photos by Roe Osborn; illustrations by Tim Healey

Interior window trim always begins with the stool, or the flat, horizontal part of the trim. I like to think of it as the place where folks typically set a plant. This piece usually involves the most fitting work. A stool has to fit against the wall on both sides of the window, as well as against the window itself or the sill stop in front of the window **(1)**.

The stool is a landing place for the jamb casings above, and the apron casing fits against the underside of the stool. The stool should always be installed level. It can sit directly on the sill part of the window frame or it can be padded up from the sill of the rough opening. Either way, the finished stool should fit tight against the window stop at a height that looks appropriate with the rest of the window assembly. The stool can be installed before or after the extension jambs.

Stock for the stool can take a variety of forms in a variety of materials. For this article, the stool is made of one-inch-thick paint-grade poplar with a simple bull-nose or half-round edge. As with many stock profiles, a dado on the inner part of the stock allows it to sit on the factory sill at the bottom of the window frame.

After the opening is checked for level, the first step is marking the width of the horns, or the parts of the stool that extend out along the wall on both sides. Starting at the inside edge of the side jamb, add the width of the reveal (typically 1/4 to 3/8 inch), the width of the casing, and finally, the amount that you want the horn to extend beyond the outside edge of the casing.

Mark this measurement on both sides of the window and measure between the marks for the overall length of the stool. Rough-cut a piece of stock an inch or two longer than the measurement, for a working length of stock. Now you're ready to scribe and fit the stool.

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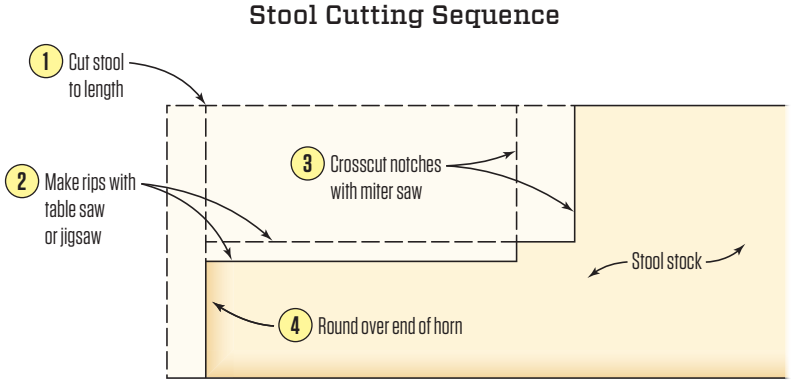
Start by adding the widths of the reveal, casing, and desired overhang. On both sides of the window, measure out from the inside of the jamb and mark that distance on the wall. Those two marks give you the overall length of the stool. Next, hold a length of stock against the wall and measure in to the window **(2)**. Using that measurement, draw a line on the stock to represent the inside edge of the jamb **(3)**. Measure the same distance from the jamb if it is not flush with the drywall, and mark the stock.

Measuring from the wall, mark that same distance near the end of the horn **(4)**. Draw lines to connect the measurement marks **(5)**. Note that this carpenter stepped the stool to fit tight against the factory jamb, and he drew in that additional line. After installing the stool, he added narrow strips to bring the jambs flush with the drywall for installing the casing.

The lines drawn will guide the saw to remove the waste from each end of the stock. Before releasing the stock from the wall, transfer the mark that you'd made earlier on the wall (to indicate the overall length of the stool) to the stock **(6)**. At the opposite side of the window, repeat the entire layout and marking process for the other end of the stool.



For the sake of safety, make the cuts for the stool horn in the proper sequence. First, cut the stool to length. Next, make the rip cuts to fit against the wall and, if necessary, the jamb. Then cut across the grain over to meet the saw kerfs from the rips. Finally, round over the end of the horn.

Start creating the horn profile by cutting the stool to its finished length at both ends. The rips along the lines parallel to the front of the stool come next. The best tool for ripping is either a jigsaw or a table saw. Then, using a miter saw or jigsaw, make the crosscuts for the inside edges of the window jambs **(7)**. Finish cuts with a handsaw, if necessary. Clamp the stock firmly to a work surface, and create the bullnose profile on the ends of the stool with a round-over bit mounted in a router **(8)**. (For stain-grade trim, miter the ends of the horn).

After cutting out the horn profile, dryfit the stool to confirm that it fits tight against the window, the jambs, and the wall. Scribe and cut any micro-adjustments that are necessary. When satisfied, apply construction adhesive to both the sill jamb and the backs of the horns **(9)**. Slide the stool into place and fasten with finish nails through the top of the stool and into the sill jamb **(10)**. Drive additional nails horizontally through the horn and into the framing on both sides of the window.

For a more detailed discussion of fitting a window stool, go to **www.jlconline.com/training-the-trades/fitting-a-window-stool**.