BY ROE OSBORN

Installing Window Casing

Last month in this column, we discussed installing window stool—the first step in trimming a window on the interior. The next step is installing window casing above and below the stool. Casing windows is a task that every finish carpenter faces on just about every project. Experienced carpenters develop methods for casing windows quickly and efficiently, following a series of predetermined steps for each window, the keys of which are outlined in the photos in this article.

Window casings attach to the jambs of the window frame, which may require jamb extensions to build them out even with the drywall. The windows in this remodeling project needed thin strips as build-outs, and that part of the installation will be covered on our website (see link at bottom of facing page). More complete coverage of the extension-jamb topic will come in a future *Training the Trades* column.

Also at our website, following the same link, you will find additional details, which we couldn't fit here, about cutting and installing casing. If you're just starting out as a finish carpenter, the online details can help you create a strategy to install casing with a minimum amount of time and effort, which in turn will help you become a more professional craftsman.

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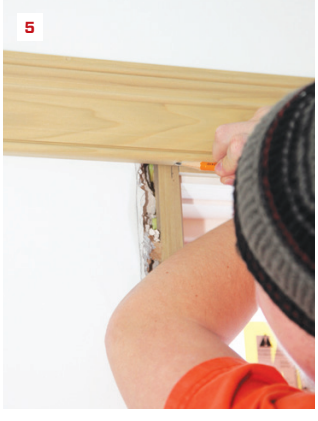
After checking to make sure that the stool is level and the window jambs are plumb, mark the reveal at the corners of the jamb **(1)**. Reveals generally vary from 1/4 to 3/8 inch, and this carpenter uses a 6-inch steel ruler for a precise measurement. Place a length of casing on the stool and mark the length at the reveal mark **(2)**. Cut the casing at 45 degrees and cut a slot in the joint face for a biscuit. (The casing pieces fit together with biscuits that align the pieces and reinforce the joints). Tack the jamb casing in place through the bead along the inside edge **(3)**. Next, make a 45-degree cut on the end of the head casing, along with a slot for a biscuit, and set it in place to check the fit **(4)**. Then mark the length at the reveal mark at the other end **(5)**.



Photos by Roe Osborn

Set the head casing aside and mark the length of the opposite jamb casing **(6)**. Make a 45-degree-angle cut at the top end and cut a slot for a biscuit. Then tack the jamb casing in place on that side **(7)**. The drywall around window openings often sits proud of the jamb extensions. In the photos, the carpenter has removed some of the drywall to allow the casing to lie flat against the jambs. He also drove an additional nail through the outer part of the profile to hold the casing flat.

Cut the other end of the head casing and dryfit the piece with biscuits to check the mating faces **(8)**. If satisfied with the joints, spread glue on the biscuits and the joint faces and install the head casing. At this point, the rest of the casings can be nailed off with 16-gauge finish nails in an even pattern every 12 inches or so. Next, the apron trim goes under the stool. Its length is the measurement between the outside edges of the jamb casings. Cut returns for the ends of the apron, gluing and pinning them in place **(9)**.

A simple jig aligns the end of the apron perfectly with the outside edge of the jamb casing **(10)**. Cut a slight back bevel on the top edge of the apron so that it fits more easily against the stool. When the apron is aligned side to side, spread a bead of adhesive along the top edge and nail off the apron **(11)**. If there is a gap between the stool and the apron, draw them together with a clamp before nailing.

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