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How to Build a Porch Swing

Turn your porch into a second living room with a DIY porch swing. We'll show you how to build one in a weekend with basic materials you can find at your local home improvement store.

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One of the best additions you can add for [outdoor living](#) is a porch swing. Instead of buying an expensive model from the store, try your hand at building one yourself. This project is great for intermediate to advanced DIYers with carpentry experience.

Before you start building a porch swing, make sure the ceiling framing on your porch is strong enough to support a two-person swing. If your joists are properly supported at both ends for load-bearing applications, you should be fine to attach the swing to a single 2x8 joist, two 2x6 joists, or three 2x4 joists.

This swing is designed to attach to the ceiling by a hook. Look for an S-hook suitable for outdoor exposure (look for galvanized or stainless steel) with a working load rating of at least 500 pounds. Your hook should also have a diameter of at least 1/2 inch and a threaded shank at least 4 inches long.

Grab a friend and save an afternoon to complete this project. Consider staining or painting your new porch swing to give it more character, and check out these cool [outdoor pillow ideas](#) to bring in some color.

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Tools

- Measuring tape
- Pencil
- Table saw
- 5-gallon bucket, if desired
- Jigsaw
- Power drill
- 1-inch spade bit

Materials

- 4-foot x 8-foot sheet of marine-grade plywood (x1), which can be cut in half for easier transport. (Note: The measurements of the 4-foot x 8-foot plywood board allows for 1/4-inch cleanup of factory edges and center cut.)
- 1-inch x 3-1/2-inch x 96-inch board (x3)
- 1-5/8-inch exterior deck screws
- Exterior wood glue
- Sandpaper
- Exterior wood filler
- Rope (2 lengths, which will depend on how high you want your swing off the ground and the location of your hanging hooks)
- Wooden bun feet (x4)
- 1-inch hole saw

Cut List

Back board and support:

- 47-1/2-inch x 21-inch (x1)
- 47-1/2-inch x 7-inch (x1)
- 13-13/16-inch x 5-1/4-inch (x2)

Frame:

- 47-1/2-inch x 3-1/2-inch (x2)
- 18-inch x 3-1/2-inch (x4)
- 58-inch x 3-1/2-inch (x2)

Seat:

- 47-1/2-inch x 26-inch (x1)
- 47-1/2-inch x 3-3/4-inch (x1)

Arms and sides:

- 47-1/2-inch x 18-inch (x1, cut in half at a 15-degree angle so that the long side of each piece is 26 inches and the short side is 21-3/16 inches. We used a flush cut router to cut.)
- 18-inch x 3-1/2-inch (x2)
- 33-1/2-inch x 5-1/4-inch (x2)
- 29-inch x 3-1/2-inch (x2, cut into two at a 15-degree angle so that the long side of one half of each board is 18-5/8 inches and the long side of the other is 10-3/8 inches.)

[DOWNLOAD THE FREE PORCH SWING BUILDING PLAN](#)

Step-by-Step Instructions

Learn how to make a porch swing with our directions below. This outdoor project should take you a few hours to complete and additional time to stain or paint the swing.

Step 1: Cut All Wood Pieces

Cut all wood pieces according to the cut list above [using a table saw](#). For the curved detail on the back of the porch swing, determine your desired curved accent

angle. This will go on the 47-1/2-inch x 21-inch back board. We used a 5-gallon bucket. Make sure the pattern is centered, and trace it on the board with a pencil. Cut out using a jigsaw. Repeat with the same pattern centered on the 47-1/2-inch x 7-inch back board support piece.



Step 2: Build the Base Frame

Assemble the base of your swing by lining up the two 47-1/2-inch x 3-1/2-inch boards parallel to each other. Align two 18-inch x 3-1/2-inch boards perpendicular between the two longer boards at each end to form a rectangle. Use a tape measure to divide and mark the long side into thirds, then align the remaining two 18-inch x 3-1/2-inch boards at those marks between the two longer boards. Glue and clamp until dry, then pre-drill your holes and use screws to attach.

Step 3: Connect Frame Supports

Center the two 58-inch x 3-1/2-inch boards flat along the long sides of your swing base. Each end of these boards should hang over the frame by 5-1/4-inches. Attach to the 47-1/2-inch boards with screws every six inches or so, and also where the 58-inch board meets the 18-inch boards.

Step 4: Build the Seat

Align the 47-1/2-inch x 3-3/4-inch board with one long edge of the 47-1/2-inch x 26-inch plywood sheet. Glue the board in place, then use clamps to hold until dry. Screw the pieces together from the bottom (the side with the board).

Step 5: Attach the Seat to the Base

Flip the frame upside-down so that the long boards are on the bottom. Set the seat, board side down, on top of the frame so that the edge of the board on the seat is flush against the side of the frame. There should be an overlap of about 1-1/4-inch on the opposite side. Attach with screws every eight inches or so from the bottom of the seat through the bottom edges of the frame.



Step 6: Build the Back

Align the two back pieces so that the cutout patterns match up, with the smaller (7-inch tall) board on top. Use a pencil and straightedge to draw a straight line down the center of the smaller board. Attach using screws every six to eight inches along the line. Line up the two 5-1/4-inch wide back support pieces vertically against the plywood backboard, one on each side. Use a straightedge to draw a line down the middle, then use screws to attach along the line.



Step 7: Build the Sides

Lay one of the angled 18-inch plywood side pieces flat on your work surface. Line up an 18-inch x 3-1/2-inch board along the squared edge of the plywood. Use a straightedge to draw a line down the center of the board, and attach with three screws along the line. Repeat with the other arm.

Line up the 10-3/8-inch angled support board perpendicular to the plywood against the 18-inch board, with the squared edge flush against the longer side of the plywood and the angled edge pointing towards the shorter edge of the plywood. Mark and drill screws through the 10-3/8-inch support board into the side of the 18-inch board to secure. Repeat with the other arm and 10-3/8-inch support board.

Line a 33-1/2-inch long arm board perpendicular along the long edge of the plywood. The arm should be offset by about 1 inch from the angled side of the plywood and by 7-1/2 inches from the squared side. Attach with screws through the top of the arm board along the edge of the plywood, and also where the arm meets the 10-3/8-inch angled support board. Repeat with the other arm.

Step 8: Attach the Arms to the Base

Line up one of the finished arm panels to the side of the base, with the 18-inch x 3-1/2-inch board perpendicular to the 58-inch x 3-1/2-inch on the side of the seat where the board is attached. The angled edge of the plywood side piece should be pointing in the opposite direction, toward the back of the swing. Pre-drill your holes and attach the side piece to the base frame with screws along the bottom of the plywood side. Repeat with the other finished arm panel.

Step 9: Attach the Backboard

Attach the back of the swing by screwing through the plywood side pieces into the sides of the back panel. Add a line of exterior wood glue along the bottom and back base of the seat to seal.

Step 10: Add the Side Trim

Align an 18-5/8-inch x 3-1/2-inch angled board below the armrest so that the angled edges are flush with the bottom of the armrest and the top of the base support. Screw into place to secure. Repeat on the opposite side.

Step 11: Sand and Smooth

Fill the screw holes with exterior wood filler to prevent weathering. Once dry, use sandpaper to smooth down any rough edges as needed.



Step 12: Drill Bore Holes

Use a hole saw to drill a 1-inch borehole through each bun foot. Mark one hole in the center of each baseboard below the armrests, and drill a 1-inch borehole. Measure and mark two holes at either end of each armrest, directly above the holes in the baseboard. Drill a 1-inch borehole at your marks on each armrest.

Step 13: Attach the Ropes

We found this step easier by setting the swing on top of two sawhorses to keep it off the ground. Measure the height of your hanging hooks and the distance you want your swing to hang from the ground. Add several inches to account for knots. (Be generous with these measurements. You can always trim any excess later.)

Starting with one side of the swing, string one end of the rope down through the front of the arm, the front of the base, and through a bun foot. Tie an overhand knot to secure. Repeat with the other end of the rope on the back side. Do not cut your excess rope until your swing is hung so you can make any adjustments to your knots and the height and balance of your swing. Repeat with the other side of the swing, and hang.