

shower simply

INSTALLATION GUIDE

Solid-surface shower wall sets

For the Classic, Modern and Traditional Subway and Plain Panel wall sets (back panel 62 in wide, side panels 36 in deep, 84 in tall) and their trim and shelf accessories. Read the whole guide before you open the crate, and leave it with the homeowner when you finish.

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1 Safety first

- **Heavy loads.** A complete wall set ships at about 247 lb on a pallet. Never lift more than about 50 lb alone. Use two people and a cart or dolly.
- **Eyes, ears and lungs.** Wear safety glasses with side shields and hearing protection when cutting. Cutting and sanding make fine dust: use dust collection and an approved dust mask.
- **Sharp edges.** Cut edges can be sharp. Wear gloves when handling cut panels.
- **Fumes and fire.** Silicone and denatured alcohol give off vapors, and alcohol is flammable. Open windows, run the exhaust fan, and keep sparks, flames and cigarettes away.
- **Electricity.** Plug power tools into a GFCI-protected outlet. Keep cords and tools away from water. Turn off breakers and check for wiring and pipes before cutting into any wall.
- **Slips and trips.** Dry the floor and all surfaces before you start, and keep cords and offcuts out of the walkway.
- **Not sure?** Stop and call us, or hire a licensed contractor. This guide covers typical alcove installs. Follow your local building codes.

Never use nails or screws to hang the panels.

The panels are bonded to the wall with 100% clear silicone only. Fasteners through the panels can crack them and let water into the wall.

2 Delivery and unpacking

- **Inspect before you sign.** Look the crate over with the driver. If anything is damaged, write it on the delivery receipt before signing, take photos, and call us the same day at 480.636.1816.
- **Open carefully.** Don't pry or cut into the face of a panel. Save the large cardboard to protect the shower floor and to use as a cutting template.
- **Store flat.** Out of the crate, keep the panels flat on a level surface until install day. Don't lean them on edge, which can warp them. Carry them on edge and don't let them flex, especially once a hole is cut.
- **Let them warm up.** Bring the panels into the bathroom at least 6 hours before installing. Install at 65 °F or warmer, and never where the room can freeze.
- **Know your finished side.** Each panel has a finished face and a backer side with stickers on it. The sticker side goes against the wall.

3 Tools and materials

- ☐ 100% clear silicone sealant: about 1 tube per 10 sq ft of panel, so 4 to 10 tubes for a typical shower. Don't use GE-brand 100% silicone with these panels.
- ☐ 1 tube of color-matched 100% silicone for the seams
- ☐ Caulking gun
- ☐ Denatured alcohol and clean, lint-free towels
- ☐ Water- or oil-based primer/sealer for the substrate
- ☐ 2 x 4 lumber for bracing
- ☐ 2 in masking tape
- ☐ Circular saw with a 60 to 80 tooth carbide blade
- ☐ Jigsaw (straight up-and-down stroke) with a bi-metal blade, 14 teeth per inch
- ☐ Drill with a 3/8 in bit, and hole saws for the valve and shower head
- ☐ Tape measure, level, builder's square
- ☐ Compass or dividers for scribing
- ☐ Sawhorses or a worktable
- ☐ Optional, for pros: an industrial hot-melt glue gun (see Step 7)

4 Prepare the walls

A good bond needs a wall that is **dry, flat, clean and sealed**. Finish all plumbing and electrical work in the walls first. Turn off the water, and take off the valve handles, trim, spout and anything else mounted on the walls.

- **Flat and square.** Walls must be solid, plumb and square to within 1/8 in. Shim or plane as needed. Don't force a panel against a bowed wall: it can crack, and it can spring away from the silicone later.
- **Width check.** The finished back wall can't be wider than the 62 in back panel. If it is, call us before you start.
- **Never over damp walls or mold.** Fix leaks and remove any mold first.

Wall surface	What to do
New framing (no wall yet)	Hang 1/2 in moisture-resistant drywall, cement board or marine-grade plywood. Leave a 1/2 in gap above the lip of the shower base so the board can't wick water. Cut holes for the valve and shower head first. Prime all board surfaces and let the primer dry fully.
Drywall, greenboard, cement board, wood	Clean off dust and soap film, then seal with a coat of water- or oil-based primer/sealer.
Plywood or OSB backer	Fasten well into the studs, clean, and seal. Use extra silicone on wood: 6 in circles of dots.
Plaster	Sand texture or swirl finishes smooth, wipe clean, let dry, then prime.
Concrete or block	Two coats of primer/sealer. Use extra silicone where the surface isn't flat.
Old ceramic tile	Firmly bonded ceramic tile can stay. Reset or remove loose tiles and remove any tile accessories. Remove all plastic tile. Pull the bottom row of tile and cut a small ventilation gap in the substrate. Clean thoroughly.
Hardboard (Masonite)	Clean, let dry, then prime.

Tile that stops short of 84 in

If the old tile ends below the top of the panels, add a filler strip (usually 1/4 in hardboard) above it, the same thickness as the tile, so the panel sits flat all the way up.

Front edge of the base

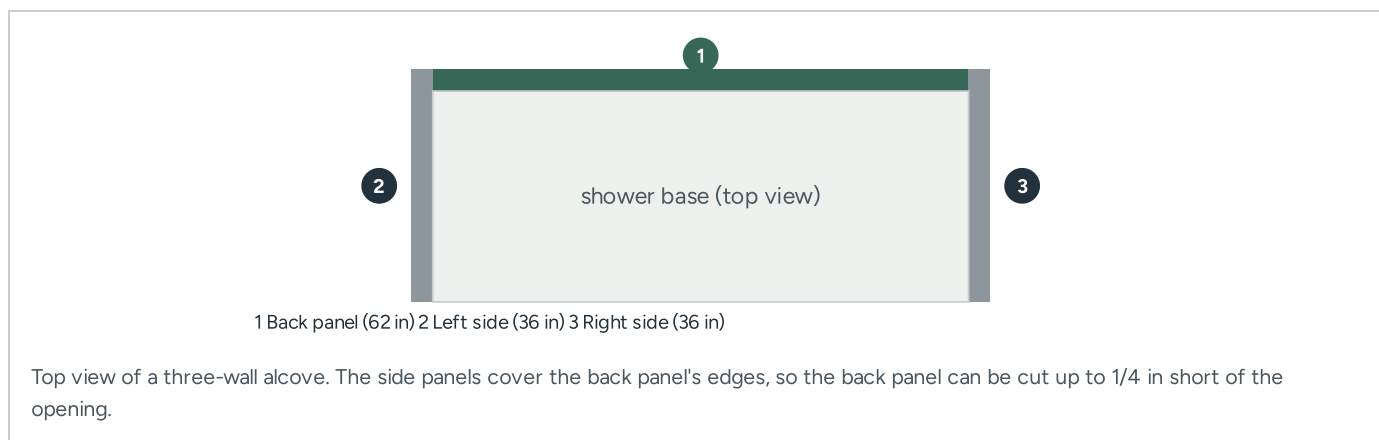
If you'll finish the front edge with apron strips cut from panel offcuts (Step 7), stop the wallboard 1/2 in short of the front of the base. If not, run the wallboard right to the front edge. Leave 1/2 in above the floor if baseboard will go on later.

5 Fit and cut the back panel

Install order is **back panel first**, then the left side, then the right side. Dry-fit and cut all three before any silicone goes on.

1. **Check the base.** With a builder's square, check that the base is square to the side walls. If the base or walls are out, draw a level line around all three walls and measure from it down to the base at several points. Transfer those measurements to the bottoms of the panels and trim them so they follow the base.
2. **Keep the grout lines level.** On subway-pattern panels, trimming to the level line keeps the molded grout lines level, even if the bottom row of "tiles" ends up a little taller or shorter. Plan the cut so the pattern looks right to you.
3. **Mark the center.** If the back panel needs trimming side to side, mark the center of the back wall and draw a plumb line. Mark the center of the panel too.
4. **Measure to each side wall** from the center line at several heights, bottom to top, so the cut follows any lean in the walls. Transfer the measurements to the panel face.

5. **Cut face up.** Lay the panel finished side up on a flat, supported surface. Put masking tape over the cut line where the saw base rides, then cut with the carbide blade or the bi-metal jigsaw blade.
6. **Dry-fit.** Set the panel in place, adjust, and hold it temporarily while you fit the side panels.

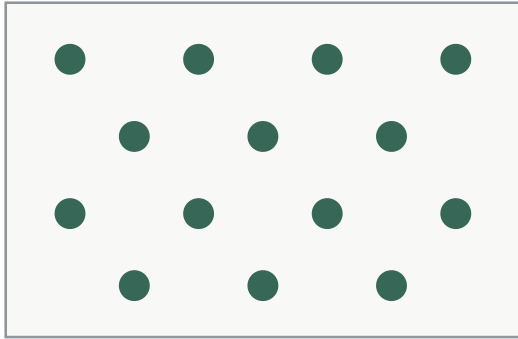


6 Fit and cut the side panels

1. **Find the finished edge.** Subway-pattern side panels have a label in a top corner. The edge nearest the label is the finished outside edge. **Don't cut it.**
2. **Scribe to the back wall.** Stand the panel on the base and slide it against the back panel. Scribe the back edge with a compass so it follows the back panel exactly. A tight scribe gives a clean 90° corner. Inside corner trim, sold separately, covers gaps up to 1/2 in if you'd rather not scribe.
3. **Cut** finished side up, with tape over the cut line, as for the back panel.
4. **Valve and shower head holes.** Measure each pipe's position from the back wall forward and from the top of the base up. Transfer to the panel face, then drill or cut **from the finished side** with a hole saw, router or jigsaw, with scrap wood underneath for a clean exit. Give every cutout **rounded corners**: sharp inside corners can start cracks.
5. **Dry-fit** each side panel and adjust.

7 Set the panels

1. **Clean the backs** of the panels with denatured alcohol or another non-oily solvent. **Never use mineral spirits** or any oily cleaner: the residue stops the silicone from bonding.
2. **Apply the silicone** as dots about 1-1/4 in across, spaced 8 to 10 in apart, over the whole back of the panel. Use more on uneven walls and wood backers. Follow the ventilation directions on the tube.
3. **Set the panels in order:** back panel, then left side, then right side.
4. **Press each panel** firmly against the wall with your hands over its entire surface so every dot makes full contact.



Silicone pattern, not to scale.

Back of panel

Dots about 1-1/4 in across

8 to 10 in apart, over the whole panel

Wood backers: extra dots in 6 in circles

Press over the entire face after setting

Hot-melt glue: pros only.

Experienced installers sometimes tack panels with an industrial hot-melt glue gun instead of bracing, applied with the silicone. Hot-melt alone never holds the panel: the silicone needs 24 hours to cure, and a panel that lets go can injure someone. Craft-type glue guns don't work. Homeowners should brace (Step 8).

Apron strips (optional)

If the wall extends past the front of the base, finish it with two small apron strips cut from panel offcuts, finished edge facing out. Measure from the top of the base to the outside of the panel, scribe the base's angle onto each strip, silicone the backs and press them on.

8 Brace for 24 hours

Until the silicone cures, the panels need steady pressure against the walls. Build temporary bracing from 2 x 4s:

1. Stand vertical braces against the back panel: **two on panels 48 in wide or less, three on wider panels** (three on the 62 in back panel).
2. Stand two vertical braces against each side panel.
3. Wedge three horizontal braces between the two side walls' braces (six pieces in all).
4. Push small blocks between the horizontal braces and the back-wall braces so they press the back panel in.
5. Leave the bracing for **24 hours**, then remove it.

Protect the panel faces.

Make sure no nails, screws or grit on the braces touch the panels. Brace firmly but don't overload the walls. Add bracing anywhere a panel isn't in full contact with the wall. For a corner (two-wall) shower, fasten the braces to the open-side walls so they can push back.

9 Shelves, trim and fixtures

Corner soap shelves

1. Pick a height of at least **43 in above the shower floor**. The shelves can stack in one corner or sit in opposite corners.
2. Draw a 4 in level line on each wall at that height to align the top edges.
3. Dry-fit. The shelf is molded a little wider than 90° so it can adjust. If needed, sand the edges to fit with 60-grit paper.
4. Run clear or color-matched silicone along the edges, press the shelf to the lines, and wipe the squeeze-out to an even bead.

5. Hold it with masking tape for about 2 hours. Put nothing on it for 24 hours.

The soap shelf has a square back corner, so plan to run inside corner trim above and below it.

Inside corner trim

1. Measure and cut the trim to length (one piece above and one below any soap shelf). Dry-fit.
2. Clean the panel corner and the back of the trim with denatured alcohol.
3. Run a 1/8 to 1/4 in bead of silicone in an S pattern down the back of the trim, press it in, and wipe off the excess.
4. Hold it with at least three pieces of masking tape until the silicone grabs.

Recessed shelves

Cut the opening only after the panel is installed and its silicone has cured. Place it between studs, check for pipes and wires first, round the corners of the cutout, and set the shelf in silicone.

Grab bars, seats, doors and other fixtures

- **Anchor every grab bar and seat into solid blocking** or a structural plywood/OSB backer behind the panels. Never rely on the panel or drywall alone. Grab bars should meet current ANSI A117.1 requirements. Where there's no blocking, use a rated through-wall anchor made for the load.
- Drill pilot holes through the panel slightly larger than the fastener. If you use anchors, drill large enough for the anchor head to pass through the panel into the wall behind.
- Seal every hole and the edge of each fixture with 100% clear silicone.

10 Final caulk

1. Run a bead of color-matched 100% silicone along every inside seam: the corners, where the panels meet the base, and around the valve and shower head.
2. Run a bead along the outside edges where the panels meet the wall. The silicone can't be painted.
3. Check every joint for gaps and fill them. Clean up stray silicone with denatured alcohol. Don't disturb fresh joints.
4. Wait at least **24 hours** before using the shower.

Leave this guide with the homeowner.

It has the care and maintenance instructions they'll need.

11 Care and maintenance

- **Everyday:** wipe the walls with a towel after showering to stop water spots.
- **Cleaning:** warm water, a soft cloth and everyday bathroom cleaners. Check the label: use only cleaners that say they're safe for solid surface or acrylic, and **rinse them off within five minutes**. Don't leave daily spray-on cleaners sitting on the walls.
- **Deep clean:** an occasional scrub with a mild household abrasive cleaner keeps the original finish.
- **Check the caulk monthly.** Recaulk any joint that is cracked or pulling away. Cracked caulk lets water into the wall.

Questions?

Call Shower Simply at 480.636.1816 or visit showersimply.com. Have your order number ready.