

BY GREG AND SUE BURNET

Running Baseboard

Baseboard is often the last trim element installed in a house. It provides a visual transition between the floor and the wall. If the floors are flat, installing baseboard is usually straightforward; aspiring carpenters commonly learn about cut lists, coping, mitering, splicing, and other trade basics doing this task. This article is a brief glimpse at baseboard installation. A detailed discussion about the associated tasks is too involved to present here, but more details can be found online, at jlconline.com/training-the-trades/running-baseboard.

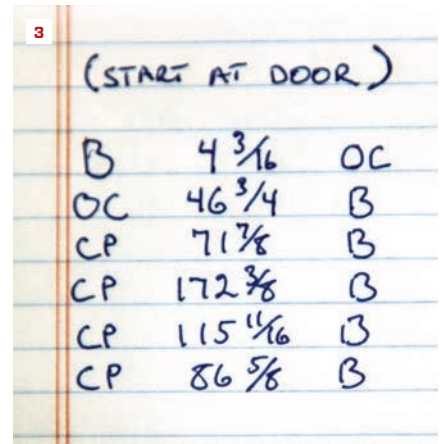
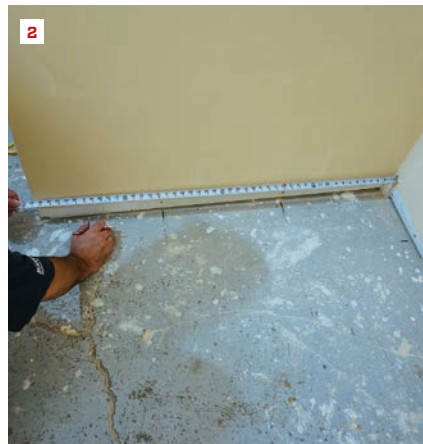
Decide where to start. Before I measure or cut anything, I look at the room and find a starting point, usually at a cased door opening. Being right-handed, I find it easiest to work from left to right (clockwise) around a room. For profiled moldings, I keep the coped ends to the left where they meet at inside corners. Once you have established a starting point and a direction, stick with them to maintain efficiency.

Make a cut list. No other area of trim installation benefits more from having a cut list than

baseboard. If you work off a list, you need to be on your hands and knees only twice: once for measuring and once to install the pieces after they're cut. Without a list, you would need to do the baseboard a length at a time, constantly getting up and down, which is slow and tiring. In addition, depending on the house layout, it's not uncommon to have the miter-saw station several rooms away. Long lengths can be difficult to maneuver through an average house, and having a cut list minimizes trips to and from the saw.

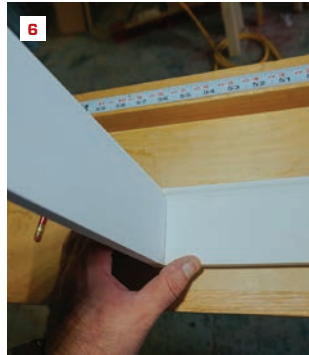
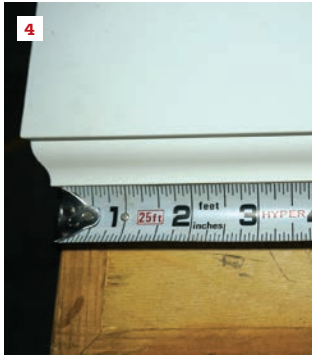
Trust your measurements. Over time, the experience of using a cut list will help to give you confidence in making and recording your measurements. Mistakes will become obvious, but remember: A piece of base cut to the wrong length can be used elsewhere on a project. Also, baseboard is at floor level, which is often more visually forgiving than other trim areas.

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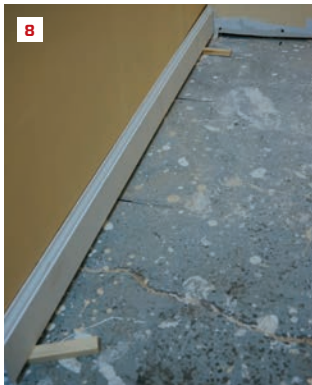


The first step in installing baseboard is marking the stud locations on the floor so that the pieces can be anchored securely to the framing (1). Working in one direction around the room, measure each length (2) and write the measurement on a cut list (3). On the cut list, indicate the cut for each end: B for butt cut; OC for outside corner; and CP for the coped side of an inside corner.


Photos by Sue Burnet



When measuring baseboard stock, align angled cuts with the work-table edge and pull the measurement from there **(4)**. Inside corners should always be coped **(5)** to create a tight joint **(6)**. See the entire process online at the website noted below. For long runs that exceed the length of your stock, use a 30-degree scarf joint to join two pieces **(7)**.



Install lengths in the order that you measured the room. Use blocks under baseboard runs to allow space for finish flooring **(8)**. Overcut lengths slightly and “spring” them into place for tight inside corners **(9)**. Apply glue to both sides of a scarf joint on long lengths, nailing in the first piece before applying glue **(10)**. Also apply glue to both sides of outside corners **(11)**. Pins hold the corner together until the glue sets **(12)**.

 For a more detailed discussion on running baseboard, go to www.jlconline.com/training-the-trades/running-baseboard.