

How to Build a Doghouse

Skill Level: **Beginner**



Man's best friend wants a home to be proud of too. If you are looking for a great family project, throw him a bone and build him a doghouse. You can give your dog a haven from the weather that also matches your house. With these instructions a beginner level do-it-yourselfer should be able to complete this project in a weekend, using common household tools.

Tools & Materials

Tools

- Measuring tape
- Hammer
- Square
- Circular saw
- Table saw(optional)
- Paintbrush
- Dust mask
- Goggles
- Hearing protection

Materials

- 4'x8' sheet of 5/8" exterior siding
- 1- 8' 2x4 (to be cut into 2x2's)
- 1- 10' 2x4, rated for outdoor use
- Nails-16d for base, 8d for house, and short roofing nails if using shingles
- Shingles (optional)
- Finishing material (paint or nontoxic wood preservative)

[Back to Top](#)

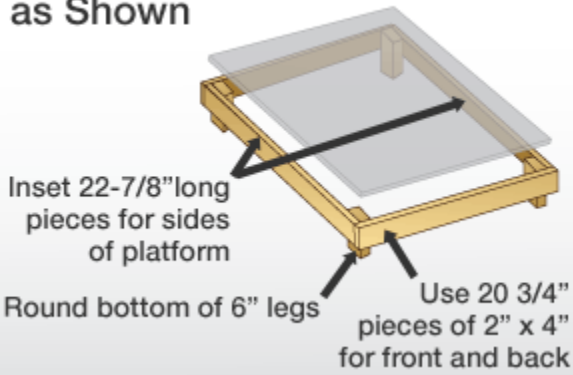
Building an attractive and safe doghouse doesn't have to be a complicated project. Just keep a few basic principles in mind:

- The house should have a floor which sits far enough above ground to prevent water from entering on the rainiest days. Raising the floor will also isolate it from the cold ground in the winter.
- Consider your dog's habits. For example, some dogs like to sit on top of their house. If you suspect that this may be the case with your dog, don't put any roll roofing or shingles on the top of the house since they can get hot in the summer sun. Just use an exterior plywood panel, treated with a nontoxic preservative like linseed oil. (The doghouse in this how-to uses a traditional peaked roof design, but could easily be modified to incorporate a slanted roof.)
- The illustrated doghouse was designed for an average sized dog. Feel free to scale the dimensions up or down as necessary to accommodate your dog. It should be large enough to allow your pet to turn around easily in it. Don't make it too large, since a smaller house is more easily heated by the dog's natural body heat-an important consideration in winter.

Make sure nails are accurately driven. You don't want the points of nails sticking into the living space of your pet; they could cause injury.

[Back to Top](#)

Assemble Platform as Shown



The illustration provides the dimensions for the panel elements of our doghouse. The house is designed to make the most use of a single sheet of plywood siding. Notice that the drawing has two floor panels-this is so you can double the thickness of the floor for rigidity.

Step 1: Lay out the panels on the back of the siding as shown in the drawing. Then, carefully cut out the panels on the lines. Cut the entry hole only large enough to allow your dog easy access.

Step 2: Cut your 10' 2x4 into the following:

- 2 pieces 22-7/8" long (platform sides)
- 2 pieces 20 3/4" long (platform front and back)
- 4 pieces 6" long (platform legs)

These will be used to build the platform on which the house will be built.

[Back to Top](#)

Consult the drawing at right when performing the following steps:

Step 1: Round the bottom of the 6" platform legs.

Step 2: With tops aligned, nail the legs flush against the inside edges of the 22-7/8" long side pieces of the platform.

Step 3: Assemble the frame by nailing the 20 3/4" front, back and side pieces in place as shown.
Note: The front and back pieces overlap the ends of the side pieces.

Step 4: Finally, align the first floor panel with the frame. It should align without overhanging edges. This will assure that the frame is square and that it was properly assembled. If the floor and frame don't match up, double-check to make sure you have correctly assembled the frame. If the frame is assembled properly but there is a slight overhang in a place or two (perhaps because the panels weren't cut perfectly straight), trim off the excess with a circular saw. When all is well, nail both floor panels in place.

[Back to Top](#)

Step 1: Rip the 8' 2x4 into 2x2 stock to be used as frame elements.

Step 2: From these, cut 4 pieces 12 1/2" long.

Step 3: Nail these pieces flush against the short edges of the sides. One frame piece should be positioned starting at the top of each side corner, leaving a 3 1/2" space at the bottom to allow the side panel to overhang the platform.

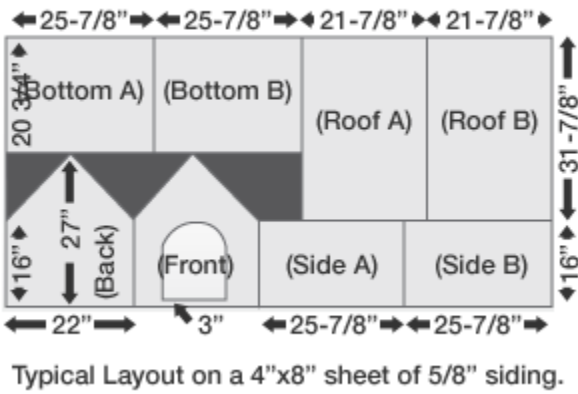
Also attach frame pieces to the inside roof line of the front and back panels. The frame pieces should meet at the top, and extend along the roof line to approximately 2 1/2" from the sides.

Step 4: Put one of the sides in place (the edges of the side should align with the front and back of the platform) and nail it to the platform at the bottom. Repeat this step for the other side.

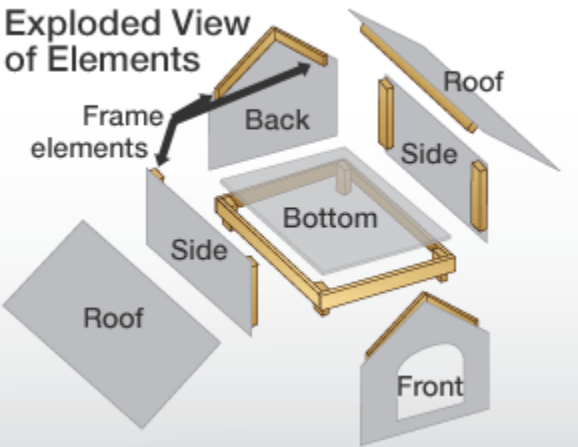
Step 5: Now you may attach the back of the doghouse. Align it with the sides, and nail it in place, first against the platform, then into the 2"x 2" frame members in the corners. Do the same for the front.

You now have a doghouse with no roof. While you still have the chance, check carefully inside the house to make sure there are no exposed nail points. Cut and file down the edges of any exposed nails that could injure the dog.

[Back to Top](#)



Exploded View of Elements



Step 1: Nail a 22" long piece of 2"x 2" flush against the top inside edge of one of the roof panels (along the 32" axis). The piece should be centered, 5" in from the edges of the panel. When both roof panels are installed, this piece will run across and support the ridge cap.

Step 2: Place the first roof panel in position (the one with the frame piece along the top inside edge), and nail it to the frame attached to the top of the front and back of the doghouse. Be careful not to miss with the nails. You don't want to leave exposed nail points inside the doghouse. You may not be able to get inside once it is finished to take care of any problems.

Step 3: Nail the remaining roof panel in place.

[Back to Top](#)

Shingles are an inexpensive and attractive way to prevent a doghouse from leaking. If you wish, you can shingle the dog's house to match your own. They are not hard to install, and a doghouse-unlike your own home-is forgiving of mistakes.

For a doghouse, using roofing felt is optional. If you have some lying around, or if you are just super conscientious and really, really love your dog, staple the paper to the roof in a single sheet running up one side and down the other. Be stingy with those staples though; you just need to hold the stuff in place until you can install the shingles.

Run the first row of shingles upside down (split tabs up) along the bottom of the roof edges. Use short roofing nails. Then, starting directly on top of this row, begin nailing the shingles in place in the pattern you desire. Cap the ridge with cut shingle tabs to prevent leaking. Take a look at your own roof. It will show you how it should look.

If you choose not to use shingles, form a cap from a piece of aluminum flashing to run along the joint where the two roof panels meet. Run two beads of roofing cement, or silicone caulk, along the bottom of the cap and nail it in place.

Round and sand any rough edges of the doghouse that could injure your dog. Some people prime and paint their doghouses to match their homes. Others treat the wood with linseed oil only, in case the dog tries to eat it. If you do paint your doghouse, use a good quality exterior latex house paint.

[Back to Top](#)

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