Basic Tools You Will Need

- Miter Box and Back Saw or Miter Saw: allows you to cut perfect angles.
- Coping Saw: the thin blade allows you to carve the end of a moulding for a tight fit against another piece.
- Nails: available in various sizes and materials. The most common size used in moulding is 1-1/4” (3d) or 1-1/2” (4d) finishing nail. Select a galvanized or stainless steel nail for outdoor use.
- Nail Set: use to drive the nail below the wood surface without marring the moulding.
- Hammer: allows you to drive a nail into a piece of moulding. Always wear safety goggles.
- Staple Gun and Staples: can be used in place of a hammer and nails. Note: spring action staplers should NOT be used on moulding.
- Tape Measure: use 25’ rule for most applications.

Additional items you will use: sandpaper, wood glue, wood filler, caulk, and paint or stain.

Planning Your Project

Measure the length of each wall, taking into account openings for windows and doors. Remember to add ten percent to the end total for mitering.

Moulding is available in a variety of lengths. Longer lengths of moulding, particularly in larger rooms, require fewer cuts making them easier to install. However, when selecting your lengths of moulding, keep in mind that you will have to transport the pieces home.

Splicing

For long walls that a single piece of moulding will not accommodate, splice your moulding together. Miter the joining ends at opposite 45° angles. This cut will make a scarf joint, the least noticeable way to join two pieces of moulding.

Coping

A coped joint is most commonly used to complete an inside corner when installing base, crown or chair rail. Particularly in older homes where corners may not be perfectly square, coping ensures a tightly matched corner.

To create a coped joint, cut one piece square, butting it against the wall. There are two coping methods you can utilize to complete the corner: tracing or mitering.

Tracing: By tracing the face of the profile on the adjoining piece you can cope out the backside of the moulding, using the traced edge as your cutting guide.

Mitering: Miter the adjoining piece at a 45° angle, exposing the face of the profile. Follow the front curve of the profile, sawing at a 90° angle.

For both the tracing and mitering methods of coping, you may need to use sandpaper or a file to smooth and form the edges. When finished, the faces of your moulding profiles should fit perfectly.

Mitering

A miter box and back saw or miter saw are tools commonly used to create an angle where two pieces of moulding join.

Trim each piece of moulding the opposite direction of the adjoining piece. For tightly mitered joints, nail and glue the pieces together. After the glue has set, it is safe to countersink the nails. (Pictured right).

Base Mouldings

Base Moulding adds a finished look to the room by hiding the area where the wall and floor meet. Base applications also protect the wall when vacuuming or sweeping.

Base Shoe (not pictured) covers areas where the floor and base moulding do not meet evenly. Base Shoe is ideal for smooth, flat surfaces such as hardwood or vinyl flooring.
Adding Chair Rail to a room encompasses both architectural diversity and protection. Consider the illustrations below for potential variations to traditional chair rail.

Chair Rail

Chair Rail adds both decoration and protection to a wall. It can separate materials such as wallpaper and paint, or guard walls from furniture. Chair Rail is typically installed between 33” and 35” from the floor. Common types of Chair Rail are shown above.

Door and Window Casings

Door and Window Casings cover the gap between window or door jamb and wall. A 1/4" edge (known as a reveal) should be left between the face of the jamb and the edge of the casing. Before hanging casing, the corners should be mitered. Attach the top casing first, then sides, using small finishing nails. When complete, counter sinking the nails and filling with putty.

Built-Up Ceiling

Capture the attention of guests by creating a dynamic ceiling moulding of your own. Below are several illustrations of potential build-ups.

“Build-Up” Mouldings

Some architectural effects call for designs not available in standard moulding profiles. You can create elaborate patterns by creating your own build-up moulding. A build-up is the combination of two or more standard profiles.

Ceiling Mouldings

Ceiling Moulding adds visual appeal and character where the wall meets the ceiling. Above are some common types of Ceiling Mouldings.

Built-Up Base

Below you will find illustrations of looks that can be achieved through built-up base applications. Keep in mind that the moulding you select should reflect your personal taste and style.

Finishing Tips

Finishing techniques are a matter of personal preference. The following tips are suggestions that you may follow to install your moulding, but are not the only choices available.

1. Choose a solid moulding for staining. If you wish to paint the moulding, finger-jointed, primed, and MDF (or wood composite) species are excellent options.
2. Apply the stain or paint to the moulding before cutting or installing.
3. Measure the room and cut your moulding.
4. Install one piece at a time.
5. After all moulding is in place:
   a. Countersink with nail set
   b. Fill the nail holes with wood putty
   c. Touch up the finish
   d. Fill the gaps between the wall and moulding with caulk