J THOMAS HOME

INSTALLATION GUIDE FOR 1-5/8” FLOATING SHELVES

This guide covers installation for our most popular style: the **1 5/8” solid wood floating shelves.** Whether you're adding a single shelf or outfitting a full wall, these instructions will help ensure a secure, clean install.

The **1 5/8” shelves** are made from solid hardwood with a slim, modern profile. They feature face grain on the front, top, and bottom, with end grain on the sides. Each includes a heavy-duty metal bracket for strong, hidden support.

WHAT’S INCLUDED

Shelf

Metal Bracket

#10 x 3" Screws

#6 x 5/8" Screws

TOOLS NEEDED FOR INSTALLATION

Drill

Drill Bits

Level

Pencil

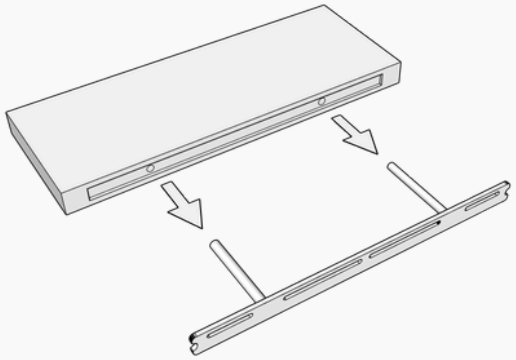
Tape measure

Stud Finder (Optional)

Toggle Bolts (Optional)

FLOATING SHELF INSTALLATION STEPS

1



Remove the Bracket

Remove the bracket from the shelf. If the bracket is tight, gently wiggle it until it comes out.

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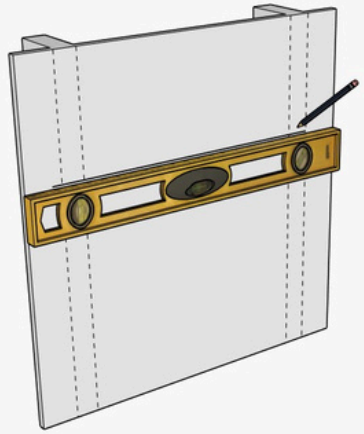

Mark the Bracket Location

Using your level, draw a horizontal line extending left and right from the spot where the shelf bracket will go. This will be your starting point for positioning the bracket.

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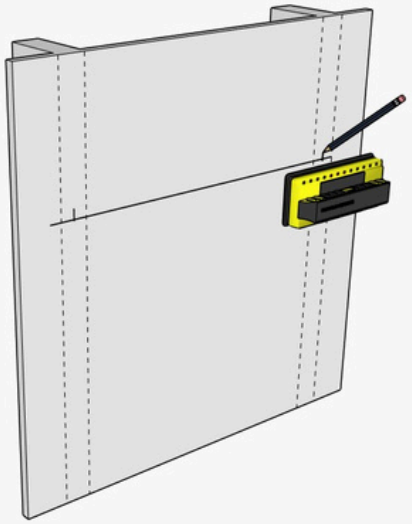
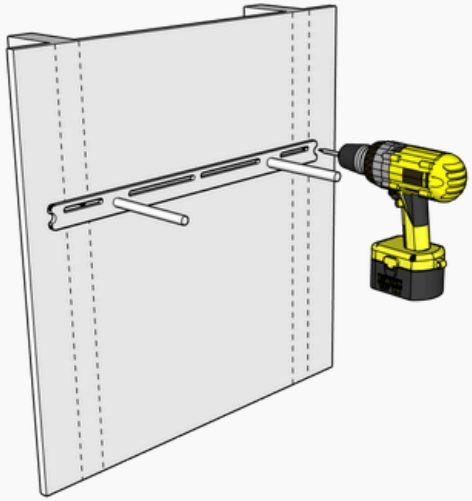


Locate the Wall Studs

Use a stud finder to locate the studs along your marked line. Mark the screw locations on the wall where they intersect with the studs. For best support, secure the bracket into two studs if possible. If only one stud is available, use toggle bolts spaced approximately every 8–12 inches in addition to the screw into the stud.

Tip: See page 4 for info on studs and other ways to locate them.

4



Position and Mount the Bracket

Align the bracket on the wall with your stud marks, **making sure the slotted mounting holes are towards the top.** Secure with the long screws. For studs, drill 1/8" pilot holes first.

Top of bracket

Bottom of bracket

Have Questions? We're Here to Help.

Email: customerservice@jthomashome.com
Call: 913-353-4283
Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST

Installing on Alternative Surfaces

Installing your shelves on a surface other than drywall? No problem. With a few simple adjustments, mounting on tile, stone, concrete, or acoustic panels is easy. See page 5 for detailed instructions and tips for these surfaces.

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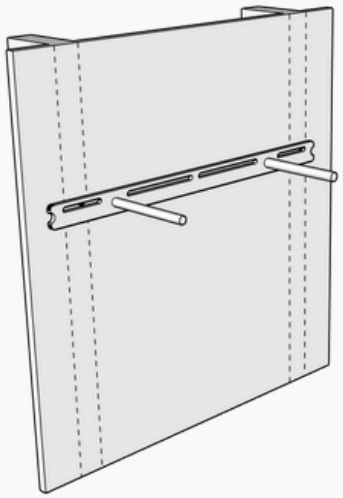
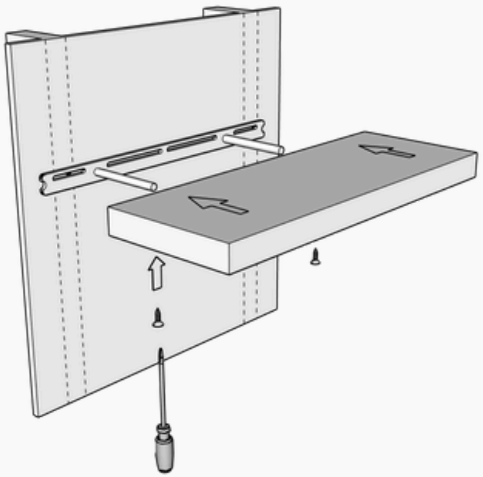


Final Bracket Check

Double-check that the bracket is fully secured and does not sag. Adjust if needed. A secure bracket ensures a stable shelf.

Note: Rods should be level or tilted slightly up. Make sure the bracket is tight against the wall and doesn't pull away from the wall when you press down on the rods.

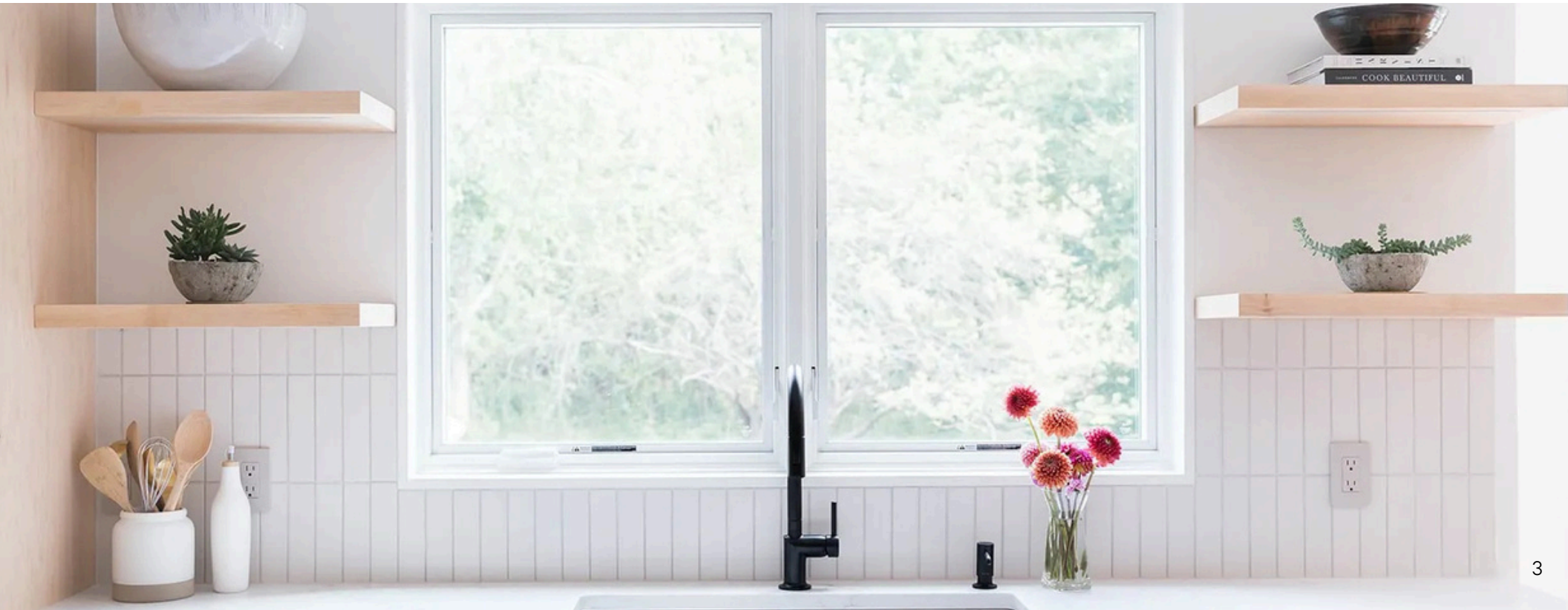
6



Attach the Shelf

- Slide the wooden shelf onto the bracket arms, ensuring it fits snugly and the bracket reaches the back of the shelf.
- Using a screwdriver (not a power drill), drive the small set screws into the pre-drilled holes along the underside of the shelf to lock it in place.

If you notice sagging, see our troubleshooting tips on page 6 for guidance.



ADDITIONAL TIPS, TRICKS AND TROUBLESHOOTING FOR FLOATING SHELF INSTALLATION

What are Studs and How to Locate them

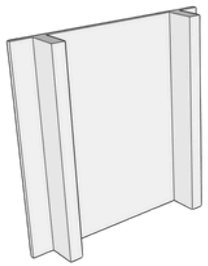
Stud Basics
A stud is a vertical 2x4 wood beam behind your drywall that supports your wall. Floating shelves should be anchored into at least one stud—two is ideal for added strength. For extra support, use toggle bolts every 8–12 inches along the bracket between the studs.

Finding a Stud
Best method: Use a stud finder for quick and accurate results.
No stud finder? Try these alternatives:
Knock Test

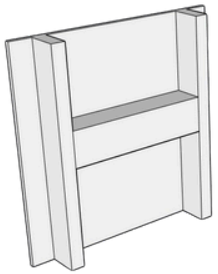
- Tap along the wall in a horizontal line.
- A hollow sound indicates no stud, while a solid thud likely means you've found one.
- Mark the solid spots for further checking.

Outlet Method

- Turn off power and remove an outlet cover.
- Look inside to see which side the stud is on.
- Studs are typically spaced 16 inches apart (sometimes 24 inches), measured center to center.



Wall showing studs



Wall studs with blocking

Blocking (if walls are open))

What is Blocking?
Blocking means adding horizontal wood pieces—usually 2x4 or 2x6 lumber—between wall studs. This creates a solid surface behind the drywall so every screw in your floating shelf bracket can anchor into wood.

Why Use It?
If your walls are already open this will make the final installation even easier. In essence, it turns the entire space into a stud so every screw hits solid wood.

Pros: Provides maximum strength and long-term stability. Makes hanging a breeze everywhere it's installed.

Cons: Walls need to be open and studs accessible.

Using Drywall Anchors (Toggle Bolts)

When installing floating shelves, it's best to anchor the bracket into at least two wall studs for maximum strength. If you're not able to hit studs or need extra support, heavy-duty drywall anchors—such as togglers—do a great job to support the weight. Toggle bolts expand behind the wall to securely hold screws in hollow drywall where no stud is present.

Installation Tips:

- Use toggle bolts approximately every 8–12 inches along the bracket where it spans between studs.
- The number and spacing of anchors may vary depending on your bracket and shelf size.
- Follow all manufacturer instructions for proper installation.

Our Favorites:

- TOGGLER SNAPTOGGLE Heavy-Duty Drywall Toggle Bolts, 3/16"-24 UNC Zinc-Plated Anchors
- Hillman 101085 Zinc Flat Head Phillips Machine Screws, size 10-24 x 2-1/2" (100 pack) – may be needed when custom screw lengths are required.

ADDITIONAL TIPS, TRICKS AND TROUBLESHOOTING FOR FLOATING SHELF INSTALLATION

Installing Over Tile

Installing floating shelves over tile follows the standard process with a few added steps:

- **Locate Studs:** Use a stud finder to mark where the shelf bracket will intersect wall studs behind the tile.
- **Mark Drill Points:** Mark pilot hole locations on the tile—preferably at grout lines to reduce cracking risk, if alignment allows.
- **Drill Pilot Holes:** Use a carbide-tipped or diamond tile drill bit suitable for ceramic, porcelain, or stone. Drill slowly and steadily to avoid damaging the tile.
- **Anchor as Usual:** Secure the bracket to the studs using screws. Use toggle bolts or drywall anchors between studs for added support, spaced approximately every 8–12 inches.
- **Proceed with Standard Installation:** Once anchors and screws are in place, follow the regular bracket and shelf mounting steps.

Note on Uneven Surfaces:
For textured or dimensional tile (e.g., ledgestone, stacked stone, ledger panels), the surface may not allow flush bracket mounting. In these cases:

- Build out the wall surface behind the bracket to create a level base.
- Trim or notch tile as needed around the bracket to allow proper alignment and fit.

Installing Over Brick, Stone, or Concrete

Installing Over Brick, Stone, or Concrete
Installing floating shelves over masonry surfaces like brick, stone, or concrete is similar to the standard installation but requires a few additional tools and steps:

- **Mark Bracket Placement: Plan** and mark where your bracket will be mounted. If possible, align with the mortar joints rather than the solid brick or stone to make drilling easier.
- **Use the Right Drill Bit:** You'll need a hammer drill and a masonry bit to create pilot holes in these hard surfaces. Drill slowly and steadily to maintain accuracy.
- **Install Masonry Anchors:** Instead of wood screws or standard drywall anchors, use heavy-duty masonry anchors or concrete screws (e.g., Tapcon screws) to secure the bracket directly into the wall.
- **Continue Standard Installation:** Once the bracket is anchored securely, proceed with attaching the shelf as outlined in the standard instructions.

Note on Uneven Surfaces:
For textured or irregular stone, the bracket may not sit flush. In this case:

- Shim behind the bracket or build out a level mounting surface.
- You may also need to notch the stone or adjust shelf placement for proper fit.

Installing with Metal Studs

If your wall has metal studs instead of wood, floating shelf installation requires some adjustments. Metal studs don't hold screws the same way wood does, so using regular wood screws is not recommended.

Instead, use self-drilling metal stud anchors or toggle bolts specifically rated for use with metal. These anchors are designed to grip the thin metal framing securely without stripping out. As with wood stud installations, try to anchor the bracket into at least one metal stud and then use toggle bolts or drywall anchors every 8–12 inches along the bracket to ensure even support.

When in doubt, consulting a contractor or professional installer can help ensure a safe and secure installation.

Extra Info Tip: Choosing the Right Screws
Our hardware packets include screws for wood stud installation. If you're installing into metal studs, brick, or concrete, you will need to purchase appropriate mounting hardware.

ADDITIONAL TIPS, TRICKS AND TROUBLESHOOTING FOR FLOATING SHELF INSTALLATION

Installing Over Acoustic Slat Wall Paneling

Installing floating shelves over our acoustic slat wall paneling follows the standard installation process, with a few adjustments:

- Install Slat Wall Paneling: Mount the paneling according to the manufacturer's instructions before shelf installation.
- Locate Studs: Use a stud finder to identify and mark studs behind the paneling, just as you would with drywall.
- Use Longer Screws: Because our acoustic slat wall panels are 13/16" thick, you'll need longer screws than the standard hardware provided. We recommend using screws that are 4" or longer to ensure secure bracket anchoring into the studs.

Once the brackets are installed through the paneling and into the studs, continue with the standard floating shelf installation steps.

Troubleshooting: Getting Your Floating Shelf Level

If your floating shelf isn't sitting level during installation, here are a few quick checks and fixes:

Bracket Orientation

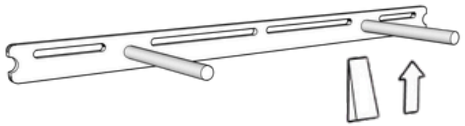
Make sure the slotted mounting holes on the bracket are facing up. This is essential for the shelf to lock into place properly.

Tightness to Wall

Rods should be level or tilted slightly up. Make sure the bracket is tight and doesn't pull away from the wall.

Using Shims to Adjust Level

If the shelf still isn't level after verifying bracket orientation, you may need to shim the bracket.



What is a Shim?

A shim is a thin, wedge-shaped piece (typically plastic or wood) used to fill small gaps and adjust level during installations. It can fill and fix uneveness along the wall.

How to Install Shims

- Loosen the bracket screws just enough to slide the shim between the bracket and the wall at the mounting points.
- With the shim inserted, slide the shelf onto the bracket to check if it's level.
- If it's still off, adjust the shim slightly higher until the shelf sits level or rods point up slightly.

Trimming the Shims

Once the shelf is level:

- Tighten the bracket screws fully.
- Trim the excess shim material by scoring it with a utility knife and snapping it off, or by using an oscillating tool for a clean cut.
- Slide the shelf back on and secure it using the provided countersink screws underneath.

Helpful Links

Installation videos
FAQs
Warranty information
Contact Us

At J Thomas Home, we're proud to offer high-quality custom floating shelves that add both beauty and function to your space. Your new shelves are built to last and will be a timeless addition you'll enjoy for years to come.

Have questions?

Get help from a pro, email us at customerservice@jthomashome.com
Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. CST