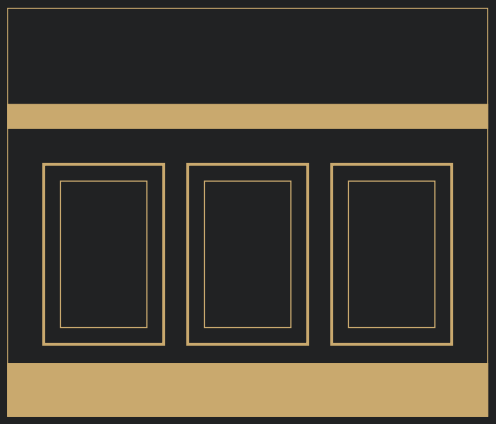
MOULDINGS · PICTURE-FRAME SYSTEM

# Wainscoting & Panel
## *Installation Guide*

Picture-frame (shadow-box) wainscoting layout, install, and finish — paired with the UWP Wainscoting & Panel Calculator. Plus the three other systems (raised-panel, board-and-batten, beadboard) for reference, special-case detailing, and field troubleshooting.



THREE LAYERS THAT FRAME A ROOM

# Baseboard, *panels, chair rail.*

Wainscoting is a three-layer assembly: a baseboard runs the floor line, a chair rail caps the top, and a panel system fills the field between them. UWP carries panel mouldings, chair rail profiles, and baseboards in six species across its NW Houston yard. This guide covers picture-frame (shadow-box) wainscoting as the primary system — it pairs directly with UWP's Wainscoting & Panel Calculator — and notes the three other systems (raised-panel, board-and-batten, beadboard) for reference and special-case detailing.

## WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- Picture-frame (shadow-box) wainscoting — UWP's primary system, paired with the Wainscoting & Panel Calculator.
- Panel-divide math — wall width to panel count, stile gap, margins, top and bottom reveals.
- Standard wainscot heights — 32"–48" — and the proportional design rules.
- Install sequence: baseboard ’chair rail ’panel mouldings.
- Special cases — inside corners, outside corners, door / window openings, electrical outlets.
- Paint-grade finishing — most wainscot is painted; the sequence that produces a clean finished look.
- Reference notes for raised-panel, board-and-batten, and beadboard variants.
- Field troubleshooting — uneven wall, out-of-plumb corners, miter gaps, paint telegraphing.

## WHAT THIS GUIDE DOES NOT COVER

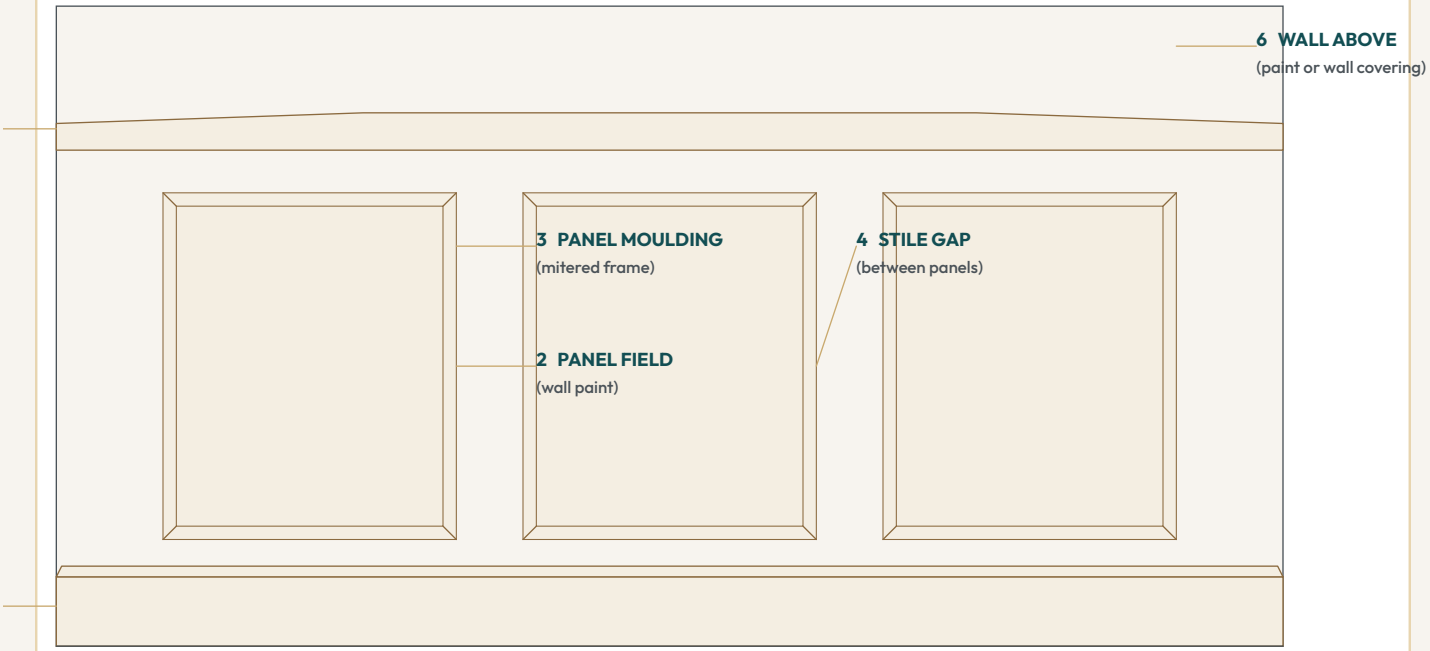
- Full raised-panel construction — stile-and-rail joinery with cope-and-stick is a cabinetmaker's assembly; UWP fabricates these in the custom shop, quoted separately.
- Coffered ceiling systems — different layout, different fastening, different scale.
- Beadboard installation in moisture environments (bathrooms with no ventilation) — verify the species and finish are rated for the conditions.
- Plaster wall substrates — assumes standard drywall over studs. Plaster requires different fastener strategy.
- Removal / demo of existing wainscot — that's a wrecking job, not a wainscot job.

## USE THE CALCULATOR FIRST

UWP's Wainscoting & Panel Calculator (uniquewoodproducts.com/resources/wainscoting-calculator) gives you panel size, panel-moulding linear feet, chair-rail and baseboard quantities — all from the wall width, wainscot height, panel count, and margin inputs. Run the calculator before ordering. This guide is the install procedure that turns those numbers into a wall.

SIX COMPONENTS DO ALL THE WORK

# The wainscot *elevation.*




PICTURE-FRAME WAINSCOTING · ONE WALL, THREE PANELS, LABELED ASSEMBLY

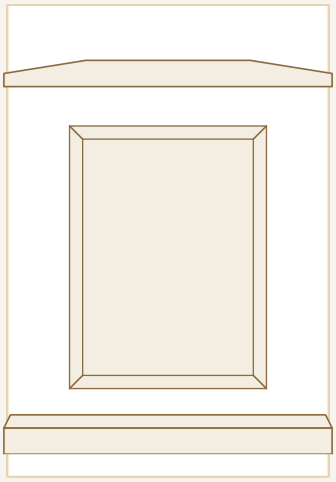
**THE VISUAL HIERARCHY**

The eye reads wainscoting top-down: chair rail (the cap), panels (the structure), baseboard (the foundation). Get any one of the three out of proportion to the others and the room reads "off." The math on pages 8–9 keeps the proportions consistent with the standard UWP heights — that's why the layout pass matters before any cuts.

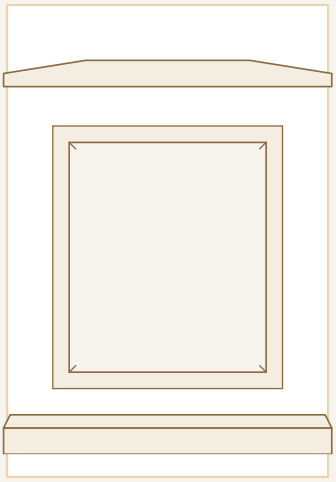
DIFFERENT FIELD, SAME FRAME

# Four systems, *one playbook.*

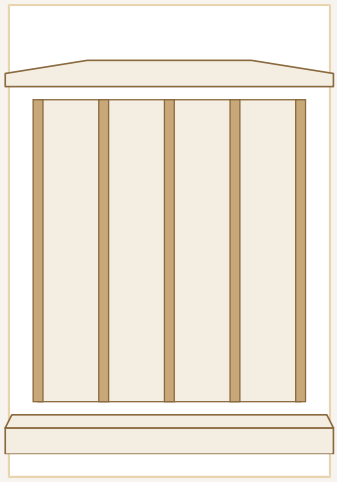
Wainscoting splits into four major systems by how the panel field is constructed. The baseboard + chair rail framework is essentially identical across all four; only the field changes. Picture-frame is UWP's primary install and the focus of this guide. The other three are reference variants — use the right field for the architectural style and the customer's budget.



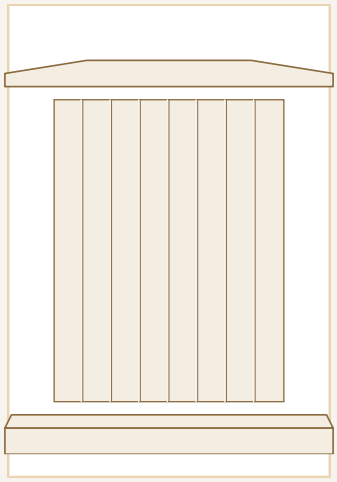
PICTURE-FRAME (UWP PRIMARY)



RAISED-PANEL (SHOP CUSTOM)



BOARD-AND-BATTEN



BEADBOARD

### PICTURE-FRAME

Panel-moulding rectangles applied to a flat wall. UWP's primary install — supported by the on-site calculator. Most cost-effective per LF, easiest to install on imperfect walls. Paint-grade default.

### RAISED-PANEL

Stile-and-rail cabinetry construction with beveled raised panels. Requires cope-and-stick joinery — UWP's custom shop fabricates per template. Stain or paint grade. Premium.

### BOARD-AND-BATTEN

Vertical battens (1x4 strips) over flat field, evenly spaced. Modern farmhouse / craftsman. Forgiving of imperfect walls. Layout discipline still applies — see page 9.

### BEADBOARD

Vertical or horizontal T&G beaded planks as the field. Cottage / coastal / older homes. Pre-finished planks ship in 4' panels or random-length planks. Paint or clear-coat.

### SAME BASEBOARD + CHAIR RAIL, FOUR FIELDS

Whichever system you pick, the baseboard at the floor and the chair rail at the top stay identical. The only variable is what happens in the field. So if you change your mind from picture-frame to beadboard halfway through layout, the trim is already bought.

SIX SPECIES, THREE PROFILE CLASSES

# Profile *inventory.*

UWP runs baseboard, chair rail, and panel-moulding profiles in six species: red oak, white oak, poplar, maple, walnut, and finger-jointed primed (paint-grade). The catalog includes 20+ baseboard profiles, ~10 chair rail profiles, and ~15 panel-moulding small profiles. Match the profile scale to the wainscot height — taller wainscot wants heavier mouldings, shorter wainscot stays trim.

## BASEBOARDS

- 21-profile stock list (per the UWP baseboard program)
- Heights: 3-1/4", 4-1/4", 5-1/4", 6-1/4", 7-1/4"
- Profile styles: colonial, craftsman, Greek revival, modern square
- Paint-grade FJ default; species upgrades on order

See the UWP Moulding & Trim Installation Guide for full install detail on baseboard.

## CHAIR RAILS

- Heights: 1-3/4", 2-1/4", 2-3/4", 3-1/2"
- Profiles: colonial cap, Federal cap, square-cap modern, beveled
- Paint-grade FJ default; species upgrades on order
- Top of chair rail = top of wainscot — this is the dimension reference

Order chair rail one size up from baseboard for visual balance (e.g., 5-1/4" base '2-3/4" rail).

## PANEL MOULDINGS — THE FRAMES

Panel moulding is a small profile — typically 5/8" to 1-1/4" wide, with a rounded or ogee front face — used to form the picture-frame outline of each panel. UWP stocks ~15 panel-moulding profiles in widths from 1/2" to 1-3/4".

- Small (5/8" – 7/8" wide) — for 32"–36" wainscot, narrow scale
- Medium (1" – 1-1/4" wide) — UWP default, 36"–42" wainscot
- Heavy (1-1/2" – 1-3/4" wide) — for 42"–48" tall wainscot
- Pick a profile family that complements the chair rail and baseboard styles
- Paint-grade default; specify species for stain-grade panels
- Order ~12% extra for cut waste at mitered corners

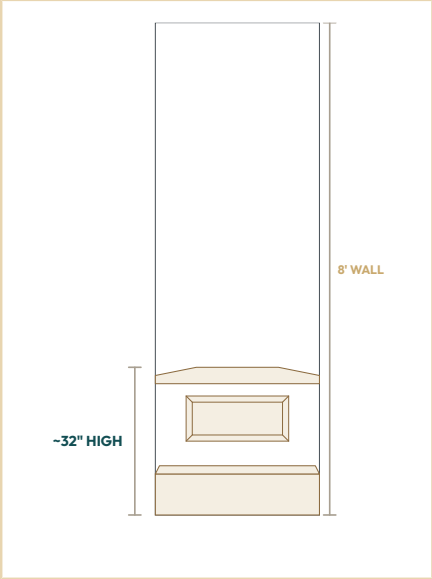
## SPECIES — SIX FAMILIES, SIX PRICES

Most wainscot is paint-grade because that's the design intent — painted millwork reads as architectural. Specify FJ (finger-jointed primed) at the counter for paint-grade. Stain-grade wainscot is a higher-touch (and higher-cost) call; verify the species matches the surrounding millwork before ordering.

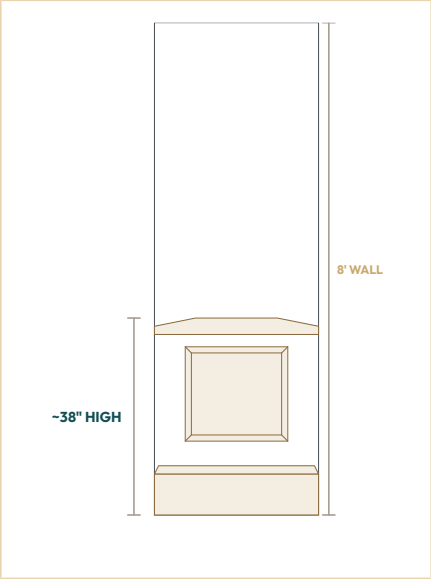
PICK THE RIGHT HEIGHT FIRST

# Heights & *proportions.*

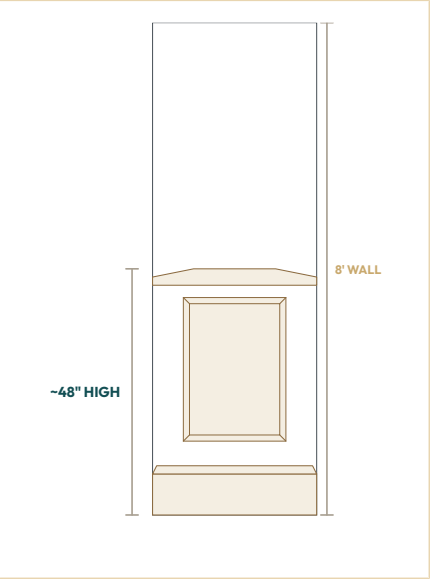
Standard wainscot heights cluster in three tiers: 32"–36" (low, dining-room standard), 36"–42" (mid, the most common), and 42"–48" (tall, formal foyer / dining / library). The rule of thirds is the typical guideline — the wainscot occupies 1/3 to 1/2 of the wall height, never more. Higher than half makes the room feel compressed.




LOW WAINSCOT · ~32"




MID WAINSCOT · ~38" (UWP DEFAULT)




TALL WAINSCOT · ~48"

### 32" — DINING STANDARD

Top of wainscot lands at chair-back height — protects the wall from chairs sliding back. Lighter moulding scale (5/8"–7/8"). Common in dining rooms and informal spaces.

### 38" — UWP DEFAULT

Most balanced for 8' and 9' ceilings. Top of chair rail at ~38" gives roughly 1/3 wall coverage. Medium moulding (1"–1-1/4"). Works in entries, dining, hallways, powder rooms, mudrooms.

### 48" — FORMAL TALL

Reserved for 10'+ ceilings — at 8', a 48" wainscot reads as half the wall and compresses. Heavier moulding (1-1/2"+). Foyers, libraries, formal dining only.

A FINISH CARPENTER'S KIT

# Tools and *materials.*

## LAYOUT & MEASURING

- 25-ft tape measure, 4-ft level, 2-ft level
- Laser level (4-line preferred) — chair rail height + plumb checks
- Chalk line in red or blue (not black — bleeds through primer)
- Stud finder + magnetic stud finder backup
- Combination square + speed square
- Sharp pencil (not a carpenter's crayon — too wide)
- Painter's tape for protecting baseboard during chair rail layout

## CUTTING

- 12" compound miter saw with 80T finish blade
- Coping saw — for inside-corner coped joints on chair rail
- Sharp 3/4" chisel — for paring miter joints
- Block plane — for fine miter adjustment
- Razor knife — for final caulk lines

## FASTENING

- 15-ga finish nailer + 2" finish nails (baseboard, chair rail)
- 18-ga brad nailer + 1-1/2" brads (panel mouldings)
- 23-ga pin nailer + 1" pins (positional tacks)
- Construction adhesive (PL Premium or equivalent)
- Wood glue (Titebond II) for miter joints

## FINISHING

- Painter's caulk (siliconized acrylic) — gaps at corners, between trim and wall
- Wood filler (paintable) — nail holes, joint gaps
- Sanding sponge (220 grit) + sanding block (180, 220)
- Primer-sealer (water-based — Kilz Premium or equivalent)
- Finish paint — semi-gloss or satin, brush-grade
- 2.5" sash brush + 4" mini roller for paint application
- Drop cloths — full coverage of floor and adjacent furniture

## CALCULATOR INPUTS

Before any ordering, run the UWP Wainscoting & Panel Calculator with these field-measured inputs:

- Wall width (longest wall first, others to follow)
- Wainscot height (floor to top of chair rail)
- Desired panel count per wall
- Stile gap between panels (2"–4" typical)
- End margin from corner to first panel (3"–6" typical)
- Top reveal (chair rail to panel) and bottom reveal (base to panel)
- Baseboard height + chair rail height (separate inputs)

**ORDER ~12% OVER THE CALCULATOR NUMBER**

The calculator gives exact linear feet plus a default waste factor. Add another ~12% on top of the calculator output for mitered corner waste, cut errors, and the inevitable "scrap that piece" judgment call. You can return unused stock; a single short stick mid-install is a half-day delay.

**WALLS ARE NEVER PLUMB. PLAN FOR IT.**

# Measure the wall, *mark the lines.*

Before any moulding goes up, establish a level chair rail line across all walls in the room and confirm the wall heights are consistent. A floor that's 1/4" out over 12 feet (very common) means using the floor as a reference will leave a wedge in the chair rail. Always work from a laser-level reference instead.

1

## *Find the lowest floor point.*

Set up a 4-line laser level in the room. Read the laser horizontal line at four corners of the room. The lowest floor reading (the spot where the laser line is highest above the floor) is your reference. Mark that wall position; this is the working datum.

2

## *Mark the chair rail line.*

From the reference wall, measure UP the wainscot height (typically 38" for the UWP default) and pencil-mark the wall. Use the laser to extend that mark around the room — the chair rail goes ON this level line, not parallel to the floor. The line stays level; the gap at the floor reveals where the floor isn't.

3

## *Mark the baseboard top.*

On the lowest floor point, the baseboard top sits at the baseboard height. For walls where the floor is higher than the reference, the baseboard rests on the floor and ends higher than the reference baseboard top — that's fine. The chair rail is the level reference, not the baseboard.

4

## *Find studs and mark.*

Walk the wall with a stud finder, marking every stud center on the wall ABOVE the chair rail line (above where the chair rail will cover them). Studs typically 16" or 24" on center. The chair rail will fasten into studs; the baseboard will fasten into the bottom plate or framing.

5

## *Mark panel positions.*

Using the calculator output, mark panel-moulding positions on the wall. End margin from corner to first panel; stile gap between adjacent panels; top reveal below the chair rail; bottom reveal above the baseboard. Pencil-mark each corner of each panel. Step back and verify the layout reads visually consistent.

**THE LASER IS NON-NEGOTIABLE**

Trying to mark chair rail off a tape measure from the floor produces a wavy chair rail that reads as poor craftsmanship from across the room. A laser level rents for $25/day and produces visibly level work. Do not skip this step.

SAME VARIABLES AS THE CALCULATOR

# Panel divide *math.*

The variables on the wall match the variables in the UWP Wainscoting & Panel Calculator one-for-one. Run the calculator with your field measurements, then transfer the panel-position marks to the wall. The math is straightforward once you fix the input order.




PANEL DIVIDE — SIX VARIABLES, ALL IN THE CALCULATOR

### THE MATH (CALCULATOR DOES THIS)

*available width* = wall width − (2 × end margin) − ((p−1) × stile gap)

*panel width* = available width ÷ p

*panel height* = wainscot height − baseboard − bottom reveal − chair rail − top reveal

### AIM FOR ~24" PANELS

The UWP default panel size lands around 24" wide × 18"–24" tall. Wider than 30" and the panel reads "lazy"; narrower than 18" and the proportions get squat.

Adjust panel count, end margin, and stile gap until panel width and height read well. The calculator shows the dimensions live — pick the count that feels right.

BENCH WORK FIRST, WALK WORK SECOND

# Pre-cut, *dry-fit, finish.*

A typical wainscot run is 30+ pieces of moulding. Cutting, fitting, and finishing each piece individually as you go is the slow way — and produces inconsistent results because you're tired by piece 25. Cut everything first, dry-fit the assembly on saw horses, then break it down and finish before install. Install becomes a fast assembly job.

1

## *Inventory the cut list.*

From the layout (page 9), produce a cut list: how many panel-moulding pieces of what length, with what miter angles. Calculator output gives total linear feet; you do the per-piece breakout. Each panel needs four mouldings (top, bottom, two sides), each mitered 45° at both ends.

2

## *Cut panel mouldings on a stop block.*

Set up the miter saw with a stop block clamped to the fence at the panel-moulding length. Cut all top + bottom horizontal pieces (typically all same length on a wall with even panels). Then reset the stop block and cut all vertical side pieces. Every piece of a given dimension is identical.

3

## *Cut baseboard and chair rail.*

Per the wall measurements, cut baseboard and chair rail with the appropriate corner joints. Inside corners get coped joints on chair rail; outside corners get mitered. Baseboard inside corners can be coped or mitered (cope is cleaner; miter is faster).

4

## *Dry-fit one wall on horses.*

Lay out one wall's worth of pieces face-up on saw horses or a flat workbench in the order they go on the wall. Confirm every miter sits tight, panel-moulding lengths match, baseboard and chair rail align. Adjust any miscut now — much faster than diagnosing on the wall.

5

## *Pre-finish (paint-grade).*

With all pieces dry-fit-confirmed, separate them and prime + paint EVERY piece before install. Use a sash brush for the front face, mini roller for the back. Two coats of primer + one coat of finish paint. Set on a stickered drying rack to cure before handling. This sounds slow; it's twice as fast as in-place finishing and far cleaner.

**TOUCH-UP AFTER INSTALL IS UNAVOIDABLE; MINIMIZE IT**

Even with pre-finish, every nail hole and every joint will need touch-up after install. The pre-finish makes touch-up the only finishing required at the wall — not full priming, sanding, painting per piece. Caulk gaps, fill nails, spot-paint touch-up. Done in an hour vs. a day.

FLOOR LINE UP

# Baseboard *first.*

Baseboard goes in first — it sets the bottom reference for everything above. Inside-corner joints can be mitered or coped (cope is cleaner on out-of-square corners, which is most corners). Outside corners are mitered. See the UWP Moulding & Trim Installation Guide for the full baseboard procedure; this page covers the wainscot-specific concerns.

1

## *Cope inside corners on the joining piece.*

For an inside corner, the receiving piece (first installed) ends with a square cut against the wall. The joining piece (second installed) gets a coped cut — cut a 45° miter on the joining face, then with a coping saw trim the back, leaving only the front profile to butt against the receiving piece. The cope absorbs corner-out-of-square errors invisibly.

2

## *Miter outside corners.*

For an outside corner (e.g., where a partition wall ends), both pieces meet at a 45° miter. Cut on the miter saw with the pitch face out. Test-fit before glue — outside corners are visible from two sides and any gap reads.

3

## *Fasten at studs.*

15-ga finish nails at every stud center (typically 16" or 24" o.c.), driven through the baseboard into framing. Add a bead of construction adhesive on the back of the baseboard before fastening for additional hold. Set nails 1/16" below the surface for putty fill.

4

## *Scribe over uneven floor.*

On a floor that dips and rises (very common), the baseboard top stays at the marked line but the bottom rests on the floor — leaving a gap that varies. Use a scribe (compass with a pencil) to transfer the floor profile onto the baseboard bottom, then trim with a jigsaw or hand plane. The bottom now follows the floor.

5

## *Caulk the top edge.*

After fastening, run a thin bead of paintable caulk along the top edge where the baseboard meets the wall. This seals the joint, gives the bottom reveal a clean edge, and hides any small wall irregularities. Tool with a wet finger; the bead should be invisible after paint.

THE LEVEL REFERENCE FOR THE ROOM

# Chair rail *next.*

The chair rail is the visual anchor of the wainscot — its level determines whether the wall reads as a clean architectural element or a wavy line. Always fasten to the laser-level reference line from page 8, not parallel to the floor or to the baseboard. The chair rail stays level; everything else follows.

1

## *Verify the chair rail line.*

Re-laser the chair rail line all the way around the room. The line should be unbroken and continuous — if any wall reads as off, re-verify the original reference. A laser level is the only tool that captures the room as a single level reference.

2

## *Install one wall at a time.*

Start at the longest wall. Set the chair rail with the top of the rail flush against the laser line. Press into position — the rail covers any minor wall imperfections behind it. Fasten with 15-ga finish nails at every stud center, plus construction adhesive on the back of the rail for hold.

3

## *Cope inside corners.*

Same method as baseboard — receiving piece (first installed) has a square cut against the wall; joining piece (second installed) is coped to fit. Coping a chair rail with the profile up-curve and bottom flat is harder than baseboard; practice on a scrap before the real piece. The cope hides any wall corner that's not 90°.

4

## *Miter outside corners.*

45° miter joints at outside corners — same as baseboard. Test-fit before glue. The chair rail is visible from two sides at an outside corner, so any gap reads.

5

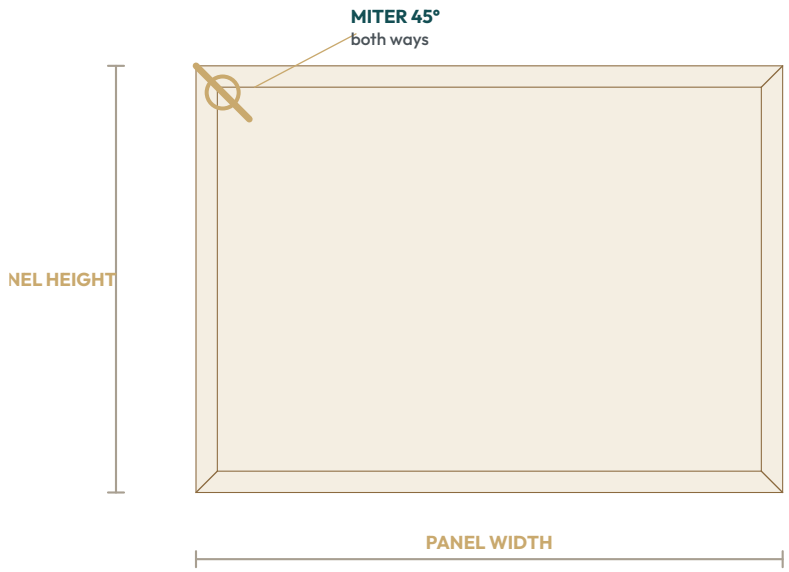
## *Caulk top and bottom edges.*

After all chair rail is fastened, run a thin caulk bead along the TOP edge where the rail meets the wall above. This seals the joint cleanly. The bottom edge (where the rail face meets the panel field below) gets caulk too — the panel mouldings will go below this caulk line, so the line is hidden once panels are installed.

> **GLUE THE CHAIR RAIL TOO**
>
> Construction adhesive on the chair rail back is non-negotiable for a long-lasting install. Finish nails alone work for residential code, but the rail will rattle slightly under hand pressure. Add adhesive on the studs path and the rail becomes structural.

THE PICTURE-FRAME

# Panel mouldings *last.*




PICTURE-FRAME PANEL · 4 PIECES, 8 MITERS, MITERED CORNERS GLUED

1

## *Verify panel layout marks.*

On each wall, the panel positions are already marked from page 8. Re-verify with a 4-ft level: each panel corner is plumb to the others; the top edges align horizontally; the bottom edges align horizontally. Any drift here will show.

2

## *Apply construction adhesive to the back of each panel-moulding piece.*

Thin bead of construction adhesive (PL Premium or similar) along the back of each cut moulding piece. Avoid puddling at the ends where the miter will be.

3

## *Install top horizontal first.*

Position the top horizontal panel-moulding piece against the wall at the marked top edge. Center it left-to-right on the panel marks. Brad-nail with 18-ga 1-1/2" brads — two pins at each end, one in the middle. The adhesive holds; the brads are positional.

4

## *Install bottom horizontal.*

Same method — adhesive on the back, position against the bottom edge marks, brad-nail.

5

## *Install side verticals.*

Fit each side piece between the top and bottom horizontals. The mitered ends should meet flush at the corners. If a gap appears, the miter is slightly off — pare with a sharp chisel for a clean fit. Apply adhesive, brad-nail.

6

## *Glue every miter joint.*

Before the brads are fully set on a side piece, apply a small dab of wood glue (Titebond II) to the miter joint at both ends. Press the joint together; squeeze out any excess glue with a damp rag. Brad-nail through the joint — the glue holds the miter, the brad locks it in place.

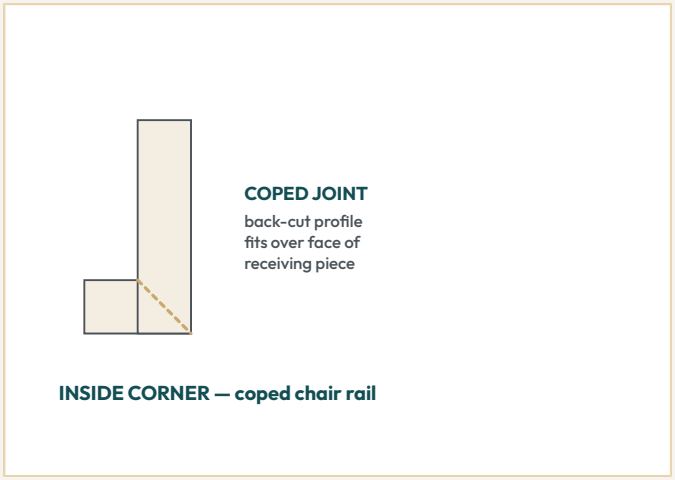
7

## *Repeat for every panel.*

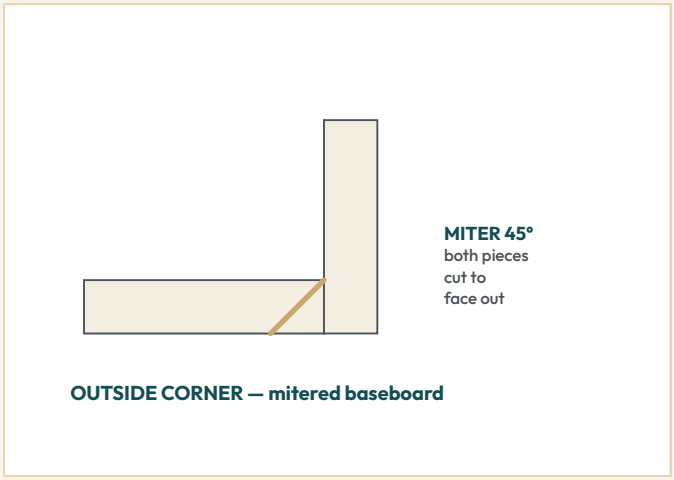
The first panel on a wall is the slowest. The third panel goes twice as fast. By the tenth panel you'll have a rhythm. Stay disciplined on adhesive amount and miter check — speed without discipline produces gappy joints.

WHERE THE WALL ISN'T A FLAT RECTANGLE

# Special *cases.*




INSIDE CORNER




OUTSIDE CORNER

1

## *Inside corners — cope, don't miter.*

On baseboard and chair rail at inside corners, cope the joining piece over the receiving piece. The cope follows the receiving piece's profile exactly. Why coped: walls are rarely a true 90°. A 45° miter on out-of-square walls leaves a visible gap; a cope sits tight regardless of wall angle.

2

## *Outside corners — miter.*

On outside corners, both pieces are mitered at 45° with the face out. Glue and pin-nail the miter. Glue prevents seasonal opening.

3

## *Door openings.*

Wainscot terminates into existing door casing — the panel-moulding rectangle stops one panel-width short of the casing. Run the chair rail and baseboard into the casing; trim around the casing top corner with a piece of chair rail or end-cap. The casing reads as a vertical wainscot panel boundary.

4

## *Window openings.*

Wainscot under a window: standard layout if the window stool is above the chair rail. If the stool is BELOW the chair rail, terminate the wainscot at the window casing instead — the window casing replaces the chair rail in that section.

5

## *Electrical outlets and switches.*

Outlets typically land in the field (above chair rail) or in the baseboard. For outlets in the baseboard or panel field, cut a clean rectangle in the moulding to expose the box. Use a multi-tool or sharp chisel — keep the cut tight to the box. Spacers behind the moulding may be needed to clear box depth.

THE WAINSCOT IS ONLY AS CLEAN AS THE CAULK

# Paint & *touch-up.*

With pre-finish complete on every piece (page 10), the post-install work is caulking, putty, and a single touch-up coat. The caulking is the work that separates a custom-look install from a contractor-look install. Every joint between trim pieces, every gap to the wall, every nail hole — caulked, puttied, and painted to match.

1

## *Set and fill all nail holes.*

Walk the room with a nail set, sinking any 15-ga or 18-ga nails proud of the surface to 1/16" below. Fill every hole with paintable wood filler. Wipe excess with a damp rag immediately. After 30 minutes, sand each filled spot with 220 grit.

2

## *Caulk every joint.*

Run a thin, even bead of paintable caulk along EVERY joint: between trim pieces, between trim and wall, miter seams at corners. Tool with a wet finger or a caulk-finishing tool. The bead should be invisible after paint — too much caulk telegraphs as a visible line; too little leaves a gap.

3

## *Caulk the wall edges.*

The top of the chair rail and the top edge of the baseboard meet the wall — caulk those joints last. These are the most visible caulk lines in the room because they're at eye level. Take the time to tool them perfectly.

4

## *Spot-prime any bare wood.*

After sanding the wood filler, any spots showing raw wood get a quick prime coat with the same primer used for pre-finish. Dries fast; ready for finish coat in an hour.

5

## *Final touch-up coat.*

Roll or brush a final finish coat on every surface — all four sides of every panel, the chair rail face, the baseboard face. The pre-finish gives you the underlying color; the touch-up coat gives the consistent sheen. Cut in carefully at the chair rail top and baseboard bottom — those are the visible "wainscot meets wall" lines.

6

## *Inspect at angles.*

After paint dries, look at the wainscot from multiple angles under natural light. Caulk shows as a sheen difference; miter gaps show as shadows; fastener holes show as dark spots. Touch up anything that reads. Walk the room once at first install and once after 24 hours of cure — second pass catches things you missed the first time.

BEFORE THE FINAL WALK-THROUGH

# Final *inspection.*

## QUALITY CHECKLIST

- [ ] Chair rail is level around the entire room (verify with laser)
- [ ] Baseboard top is consistent height where the floor is level
- [ ] All panel widths within ±1/8" of calculator output
- [ ] All panel heights consistent across the wall
- [ ] Every miter joint is tight — no visible gap
- [ ] Every inside corner is coped — clean fit
- [ ] Every outside corner is mitered + glued — no opening
- [ ] All nail holes filled and sanded smooth
- [ ] All trim-to-wall joints caulked — thin, even beads
- [ ] Top of chair rail and top of baseboard caulked to wall
- [ ] All trim painted to consistent sheen — no shiny spots
- [ ] No exposed brad-nail holes at panel-moulding corners

## TROUBLESHOOTING

**Chair rail wavy.**
Marked from the floor instead of a laser-leveled reference. Pull and re-mark the line with a laser, re-install. Or live with it — visible under directional light.

**Miter joints gap.**
Cut angle slightly off (saw fence drift) OR wall corner not square. Pull the moulding, re-cut to match the actual corner angle, re-fit. Wood filler bridges the gap but never looks right.

**Panel sizes off across walls.**
Walls aren't exactly the same length. Use the calculator per-wall and accept slight panel-width differences between walls (often imperceptible) rather than forcing equal panels.

**Paint telegraphs grain through.**
Insufficient primer on stain-grade wood, or skipped primer on FJ paint-grade. Sand smooth with 220, re-prime the whole assembly, repaint.

**Caulk cracks at the joint.**
Inferior caulk OR caulk applied without primer underneath. Cut out, re-prime, re-caulk with siliconized acrylic. Painter's caulk over bare wood always fails.

**Bottom of baseboard shows wall behind.**
Floor dips below baseboard bottom — caulk only hides small gaps. For visible gaps, install quarter-round (shoe moulding) along the baseboard bottom to bridge the gap to the floor.

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