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Looking for a do it yourself home improvement project to make your life easier? Here is what you need to know to do-it-yourself install our custom made pull out kitchen shelves. There are four ways to mount Shelves That Slide into your cabinet. The first and most common is mounting on an existing full size shelf or cabinet base. The second is mounting to an existing half shelf that is 6" - 12" deep. The third is to mount to the rear wall with sockets. The fourth method is mount to the cabinet side walls. All of these installation methods have similarities. We will cover the basic steps first, then you can go on to the specifics for your method of installation.

Use the shelf

The number one tip is to let the shelf be your tool for setting the slides. There are points in every method of installation that will be easiest to accomplish when you use the shelf as your placement guide. The drawer slides that we use have a control side and a free side. The right side slides are the control side, the track that the wheel rolls in is a captive one. The metal is bent around the wheel and the wheel will only track in that groove. The left side slide is the free side that allows for adjustment of the assembly. For this reason it is very important to pay attention to the left side slide. Any problems with slide alignment will be evident here, the right side will align itself.

Base mount installation

The easiest and usually strongest method of installing Shelves that Slide is when you are mounting onto a full depth existing shelf or the cabinet base. The first thing you need to consider is the existing shelf permanent or is it adjustable. If it is a permanent shelf you can go straight to installing the slides. If it is adjustable you need to look at two things. The first is what are the clips or pins that are holding it up made of? If they are plastic you need to replace them with metal clips or pins. The front mounting of the shelf will be subjected to twice the weight it is now exposed to when you extend a loaded shelf. The second consideration goes right along with the first in that when the loaded shelf is extended it will want to lift up in the back. This is easily remedied by placing a couple of screws in either the back or the side walls (which ever is thicker, but don't go through to an exposed wall) just above the existing shelf and leave the head sticking out far enough to hold the screw down.

Installing the slides

For a full shelf installation you should have two "L" shaped brackets on each cabinet slide. The wheeled end of the cabinet part of the slide is the front. Set the slides onto the existing shelf or cabinet base at the approximate width of the sliding shelf. Engage the shelf slides into the cabinet slides by setting the wheeled end of the shelf slide over the wheeled end of the cabinet slide. The most important side to get in place is the right side. You can always slip the left side into place after getting the right side in properly. Insert the shelf fully into the cabinet and align the front of the shelf to be square with the cabinet front and have the proper set back. The proper set back depends on your cabinet depth but it is usually about 1/2" to 3/4" back from the inside edge of the cabinet face frame. Get your screwdriver ready! When you have the shelf adjusted press down slightly and slide the shelf forward just far enough to expose the rear brackets. Insert a screw in one of the slots in the right rear bracket. Use the hole that goes side to side so you can adjust it later, tighten moderately. Now slide the shelf back into place and check the alignment. When it is adjusted properly slide the shelf out again to expose the rear bracket and place a screw in the opposite side slotted hole in a slot that goes from left to right and tighten moderately. Again slide the shelf in and check alignment. If all is well you can carefully slide off the shelf without disturbing the position of the front brackets. This may take a couple of tries. Install screws in the front brackets the same as you did for the rear brackets. Insert the shelf again and check alignment. Remember to pay careful attention to the left side slide if the gap is too large in the rear the shelf will roll great but as soon as you add weight you will get a bump when you slide it out. After you get everything aligned you can remove the shelf and install a screw in the center hole of the bracket to lock it in place, two screws per bracket is all that is needed. Congratulations your shelf is done!!! Well almost, see plastic thing.

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Half shelf installation

Half Shelf installations will not work with full extension slides. The second method of installing sliding shelves is also the second best and the second easiest. You will need a small level, preferably one with a magnetic strip on one side. Check the existing shelf to make sure it is secure and can not lift up. Also check to make sure the hardware that supports the existing shelf is metal. If you have plastic hardware and plan on loading more than lightweight items into the shelf you will have to replace the hardware with metal. The slides for your half shelf installation will have one metal "L" shaped bracket mounted toward the rear. The end with the wheels is the front! If you have brackets in the rear and front, the front ones will not be needed and should be removed. Set the rear bracket on the existing shelf and place the front edge of the slide against the cabinet face frame, back about 3/16" from the front. Place your level on the slide and level it. When you have the slide level mark the location of the front hole in the slide. You can then measure the height and make a corresponding mark on the other side face frame. It is best to drill a small pilot hole to prevent splitting, before screwing the slide in place. After you have the front of the slides attached you can set the shelf in place by lifting the wheels on the rear of the shelf slides over the wheels on the front of the cabinet slides. Pay careful attention to the right side slide. Insert the shelf all the way into the cabinet and align the shelf to be square with the cabinet front. If there is too much space between the cabinet face frames you will need to insert spacers or washers to build out. You can order spacers from us in 1/8", 3/8", and 1/2" sizes. You may also be able to find something similar in a local hardware store. Get your screwdriver ready! Check the alignment of the left side slide and when it is properly aligned press down slightly on the shelf and extend it far enough to see the rear bracket. Place a screw in one of the slotted holes and tighten moderately. Reinsert the shelf and check slide alignment. When alignment is correct repeat the process of extending the shelf and insert a screw in the other side's bracket. Again insert the shelf and adjust as needed. When everything is aligned extend the shelf again and place a screw in the center hole of the bracket to lock it in place. Congratulations your shelf is done!!! Well almost, see plastic thing. **Half Shelf installations will not work with full extension slides. Well it will work but you must use side build up, you can not attach them to the cabinet face frame.**

Rear mount sockets

Rear mount sockets are a great alternative mounting for shelves where there will not be much weight. They are perfect for adding a shelf in a bathroom cabinet. The main limitation is if they are loaded with a lot of weight they tend to only be good for a year or two before they succumb to the stress. The first step is to determine the height that you want the shelf. Make a mark on both cabinet face frames for the bottom of the shelf. Insert the cabinet slides partially into the plastic sockets (you must have specified a rear socket installation when ordering) note the brackets are different for left and right sides. Attach the front end of the slides (the end with the wheels) to the cabinet face frame where you marked. You will need to push the slide slightly against the back wall of the cabinet to get the socket seated to the needed depth. Install the shelf by lifting the rear end of the shelf slides (the end with the wheels) over the wheels on the front of the cabinet slides. Slide the shelf in completely and align it to be square with the front of the cabinet. Now comes the fun part. Make a line on the back wall to mark the position of each slide for the horizontal placement. You can now remove the shelf and place a level on the cabinet slide. Align the slide with the previous line that you made and level the height. Now you can either install one screw in the socket or mark another line for the vertical position. Repeat this process for the other side and after you have one screw in each socket reinstall the shelf and check for proper operation. Once you have the shelf adjusted, install at least one more screw in each socket. If you are having trouble getting the shelf to slide smoothly make sure the slides are parallel to each other and not twisted. Congratulations your shelf is done!!! Well almost, see plastic thing. **Rear mount sockets will not work with full extension slides. Also they will not work with shelves deeper than 21 3/4" unless longer slides are used.**

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Side mount method

When you need more weight capacity than the rear socket method can provide and you either don't have or don't want full or half shelves in your cabinet, the answer is side mounting. We can provide spacers to install the cabinet slides to the cabinet side walls. The problem is the cabinet side walls are usually not more than 1/2" thick and there is about 1" of space or more that needs to be spaced out. Leverage will lead to this being a weak installation. However if you can install vertical strips of wood on both sides (two on each side, one near the front and the other near the back) that provide the proper filling to match the space behind the cabinet face frame, a side mount installation can be the strongest and most space efficient installation. It is best to use a piece of wood the same thickness as the space behind the face frame that runs from the bottom of the cabinet to above the height that you want the shelf installed. You can glue and screw this piece of wood in place to make a secure attachment. After the wood is installed you can measure up and make a mark where you want the slides installed. Simply screw the slides in where marked and you should be able to install the sliding shelf. Just lift the rear end of the shelf slides (the end with the wheel) over the wheels on the front end of the cabinet slides. Insert the shelf fully and check for alignment paying careful attention to the left side alignment, adjust as needed. Congratulations your shelf is done!!! Well almost, see plastic thing.

Plastic thing

Finally we come to that white plastic thing. That thing is a door protector. There is one door protector per shelf included. If you have a cabinet with two doors closing on one shelf (a door on both the left and right side with no center divider) you will need two door protectors per shelf. Please request the extra door protectors under special instructions. No door protectors are needed for the economy shelves due to the extended front wood trim. The door protector is mounted to the side of the shelf. The purpose of the door protector is of course to protect the door. The plastic sticks out about 1/16" more than the drawer slide to keep you from scratching the door in case it is not opened fully before sliding out the shelf. Just screw the door protector to the side of the shelf (one screw). Watch for hinge clearance and if the door has a recessed panel make sure you mount the door protector as low as possible. The door protectors will not work on standard height shelves with full extension slides. Fortunately the front of the full extension slides is rounder than the 3/4 extension so the pullouts do not need them as badly.



Please note: The actual size of the wood box is 1" less than the size of the clear cabinet opening that you provide. This is to allow for the sliding shelves slides which use 1/2" on each side and must pass through the cabinet opening. We tell you that only so that when you receive the shelf you do not think we made an error. Do not adjust your width thinking that somehow this inch can sit behind the frame because if you do your shelf will not fit!

Disclaimer

This page is offered as a guide for installing a pull out shelf and it is not intended to offer every detail for every possible installation. It is expected that the home improvement do-it-yourselfer has sufficient knowledge as to judge the soundness of their installation of kitchen and bathroom shelves.