

Wood Screw Pilot Hole Guide

Tip: Set your PDF viewer to "Actual size" before printing to maintain scale.

Pilot Hole Size Chart

Screw Size	Softwood Pilot Hole	Hardwood Pilot Hole	Countersink Diameter	Clearance Hole
#2	1/16" (1.5mm)	5/64" (2.0mm)	3/32"	3/32"
#3	1/16" (1.5mm)	5/64" (2.0mm)	7/64"	7/64"
#4	5/64" (2.0mm)	3/32" (2.4mm)	1/8"	1/8"
#5	5/64" (2.0mm)	3/32" (2.4mm)	9/64"	9/64"
#6	3/32" (2.4mm)	7/64" (2.8mm)	5/32"	9/64"
#7	3/32" (2.4mm)	7/64" (2.8mm)	5/32"	5/32"
#8	7/64" (2.8mm)	1/8" (3.2mm)	11/64"	11/64"
#9	7/64" (2.8mm)	1/8" (3.2mm)	3/16"	3/16"
#10	1/8" (3.2mm)	9/64" (3.6mm)	3/16"	3/16"
#12	9/64" (3.6mm)	5/32" (4.0mm)	7/32"	7/32"
#14	5/32" (4.0mm)	3/16" (4.8mm)	1/4"	1/4"
1/4"	11/64" (4.4mm)	3/16" (4.8mm)	17/64"	17/64"
5/16"	7/32" (5.5mm)	15/64" (6.0mm)	21/64"	21/64"

Wood Type Reference

Softwoods	Hardwoods
Pine (white, yellow, sugar)	Oak (red, white)
Cedar (red, white)	Maple
Fir (Douglas fir)	Cherry
Spruce	Walnut
Redwood	Ash
Hemlock	Hickory

Pilot Hole Best Practices

- **Depth:** Drill pilot holes slightly shorter than the screw length
- **Angle:** Keep drill bit perfectly perpendicular to prevent angled screw installation
- **Clearance Holes:** Use in top piece when joining two boards to prevent separation
- **Countersinking:** Required for flathead screws to sit flush with the surface
- **Hard vs. Soft:** When uncertain about wood hardness, start with the smaller (softwood) pilot hole

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