

Instructions On Hanging A Porch Swing

Your new porch swing was just delivered and you need a basic guideline on how to install your new piece of porch furniture.

What You'll Need

- Stud Finder
- Safety Glasses
- Pen
- A drill and the appropriate drill bit (your drill bit should be a bit smaller than the screw)
- Swing hangers and their accompanying screws.
- Pipe-wrench pliers/regular pliers for lag eye screws or a socket ratchet or nut driver if you have hex lag screws
- 4-6 ft Ladder

1. Determine Swing Space + Hanger Measurements

Swing Space

You should have at least 24 inches of space in front and behind the swing. For side clearance, give yourself at least 8 inches on either side of the swing.

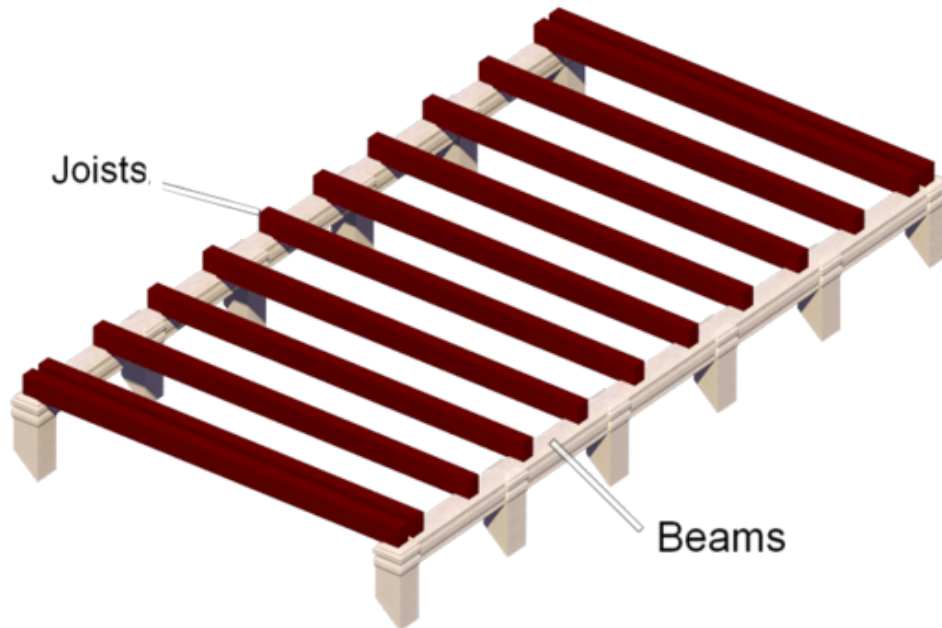
Hanger Distance

The hooks, screws eyes or eye bolts should be installed completely vertical or up to 3 inches offset per side - i.e., for a swing whose chain measures 48 inches apart, you can space the hangers 48 to 54 inches apart. This ensures even weight distribution and prevents the chains from rubbing against the swing.

2. Find The Right Beams Or Joists

For starters, you'll need to find a strong support beam or joists that will accommodate your swing. The beams and joists of a home serve as the foundational frame for the roof. They are generally the only parts of a house that are strong enough to support the weight of a porch swing or swing bed. Never install swing supports in something as flimsy as plywood or bead board.

Anything that compromises structural integrity such as creaky or deteriorated wood should cause you to reconsider your choice. If you are unsure about your particular spot, consult a professional architect, or a certified contractor for advice.



Size is Key

Porch and patio roof structures typically include horizontal joists that support the ceiling finish. Joists are often 2 x 6 or larger lumber, but they can be as small as 2 x 4. If you have access to your porch structure through the attic, note the joist size and general placement. A 2 x 4 joist is 3-1/2 inches tall; 2 x 6 is 5-1/2 inches; 2 x 8 is 7-1/4 inches. Without attic access, remove a piece of trim in the ceiling or cut a small hole to measure the joist depth. To hang a swing from a single joist or beam, it should be a 2 x 8 joist or 4 x 4 beam.

A typical two-person swing can be supported by a single 2 x 8 joist, two 2 x 6 joists, or three 2 x 4 joists, provided all joists are adequately supported at both ends for load-bearing application.

Finding the Joists

Locate the joists from the underside of the ceiling with a stud finder, then confirm each location by drilling small holes at each side of the joist. Make a mark at both side edges of the joist so you can find its center for installing the anchor.

Solving Joist Problems

Don't panic if your joists aren't big enough, or if they don't happen to fall where you need them— we've got you covered. You can:

1. Install short beams (4 x 4's work well) across the tops of multiple joists: Cut two 4 x 4 beams so they're long enough to span across three or more joists (running perpendicular to the joists).

Set each beam on top of the joists so it is centered over one of the swing anchor locations. Fasten the beams to each joist with 3-inch screws driven at an angle through each side of the beam and into the top edge of the joist.

2. Install lumber blocking (4 x 4's, 2 x 6's or larger lumber) between two adjacent joists, using joist hangers, so the blocking is flush with the bottoms of the joists.

Mark the locations for the swing anchors onto one joist, and use a framing square to transfer the marks to the neighboring joist (blocking runs perpendicular to the joists). Install joist hangers on the inside faces of the joists (the hangers will face each other), as directed by the hanger manufacturer; most are nailed to the joists with special 1 ½-inch hanger nails or screws. Position the hangers so the blocking will be flush with the top of the ceiling finish and centered over the swing anchor locations.

Cut two pieces of blocking to fit snugly between the joists, and fit them down into the hangers. Fasten the blocking to the hangers with hanger nails or screws.

Adding beams or blocking requires attic access, or you can cut a single hole in the ceiling finish that's large enough to work through, then patch the hole when you're done.

3. Install Hangers

To Install a Screw Eye or Hook

Drill a pilot hole directly into the center of the joist or beam. Thread in the screw by hand as far as possible, then use a large wrench or pliers to turn the screw until the threads are fully embedded in the lumber. You can also insert a tool handle into the eye or hook and use it as a lever to twist the screw.



To Install a Hanger Kit with Lag Screws

Hanger kits with swivel mounts are designed to mount to a joist or beam running parallel to the length of the swing. Position each mount over the center of the joist or beam, and mark through the predrilled holes for the lag screws. Remove the mount and drill a pilot hole for each screw, using a bit that's the same size as the screw's shank (not the threads). Install the mount with 3-inch lag screws, tightening the screws with a socket wrench or impact wrench.

4. Hang the Swing

The majority of swings are hung in an upside down “Y” configuration. The longer chain runs through the armrest of the swing and connects to the side of the swing seat. The shorter chain runs from the lateral swing back and connects to the longer chain to set the swing upright.

You want to install your porch swing so that it is 18”-22” inches off the ground for optimal comfort.

Set your swing down on the ground directly below your swing hangers. Place a ladder directly behind the swing and have someone lift the swing up as you climb a ladder to link the top chains onto the swing hangers. Once you have attached the longer chain, tilt the swing back about an inch and adjust the shorter chain to your comfort. Before sitting in the swing test thoroughly to ensure correct installation. And Voilà! You’ve completed the installation of your new porch swing! Now sit back, relax, and swing away!

***TIP:** Make sure to periodically check your ceiling for any signs of cracking or warping. If you notice any damage, remove your swing and consult a professional contractor or structural architect. Make sure to replace severely rusted chains.*