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Title Tag (~60 characters or less)	How to Install Drawer Slides In 5 Easy Steps
META Description (~160 characters or less)	Drawer slides let your cabinet drawers function properly. Follow this guide to learn how to install side-mount drawer slides and give your cabinets an upgrade.
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How to Install Drawer Slides in 5 Easy Steps

A comprehensive, beginner-friendly guide covering slide types, tools, and side-mount drawer slide installation steps.

If you have a drawer that isn't sliding smoothly, it may be time to replace the drawer slides. Drawers use either roller slides or ball bearing slides to glide in and out of the drawer box, and there are several types available.

Drawers can bind and stick if the drawer slides aren't installed correctly, so knowing how to install drawer slides properly is essential knowledge for both contractors and DIYers. At Eagle Woodworking, we manufacture dovetail drawers and have installed our fair share of drawer slides, so we put together this guide to walk you through how to install side-mount drawer slides and common mistakes to avoid.

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Types of Drawer Slides

If you're replacing the [drawer slides](#) on an existing drawer, start by identifying the [type of drawer slides](#). If you're installing drawer slides on the drawers for the first time, consider the different types and installation methods as well as the slides' weight capacity.

Side-mount

Side-mount slides are the most affordable option and are mounted on the side of the drawer. This means that they're visible when the drawer is open. Side-mount slides, such as the [KV GSlide 8450 Side Mount Drawer Slides](#), are less expensive than undermount slides, so keep that in mind as you plan and budget for your project.

Undermount

Undermount slides aren't visible when the drawer is open because they're mounted underneath. They also have a clip that allows you to adjust the drawer's position, so you can line it up with the cabinet even if the slide isn't installed perfectly. Undermount slides, such as the [Blum Tandem Undermount Drawer Slides](#), can hold up to a 100lb load, but if you want more robust solution Blum Movento Undermount Drawer Slides can meet heavy-duty requirements. All of these features come with a cost, so they're typically more expensive than side-mount slides.

Read our article on how to install undermount drawer slides.

Center Mount

Center mount slides are a type of undermount slide, but instead of two slides on either side of the drawer there's a single slide beneath the drawer's centerline. It isn't as popular as the other two types. But, if you're replacing the slides on drawers in an older cabinet or working with a narrow drawer, you might be working with center-mount slides.

Ball Bearing vs. Roller Slides

Within sidemount slides there are also two options: Ball bearing and roller slides. Ball bearing slides are the heavier-duty of the two and use a telescopic motion to extend the slides when the drawer is pulled out. This style offers the option of soft close and some allow the drawer to be fully extended.

Roller slides feature a plastic roller that fits into the track on the opposite member — the drawer's roller fits into the track on the cabinet's slide and vice versa. They're typically used in lighter-duty applications, like desk drawers.

Tools and Materials Needed

Before you start the project, gather your tools and materials. Luckily, drawer slide installation doesn't require any specialized tools, so these are likely already in your toolbox.

Tools and Materials

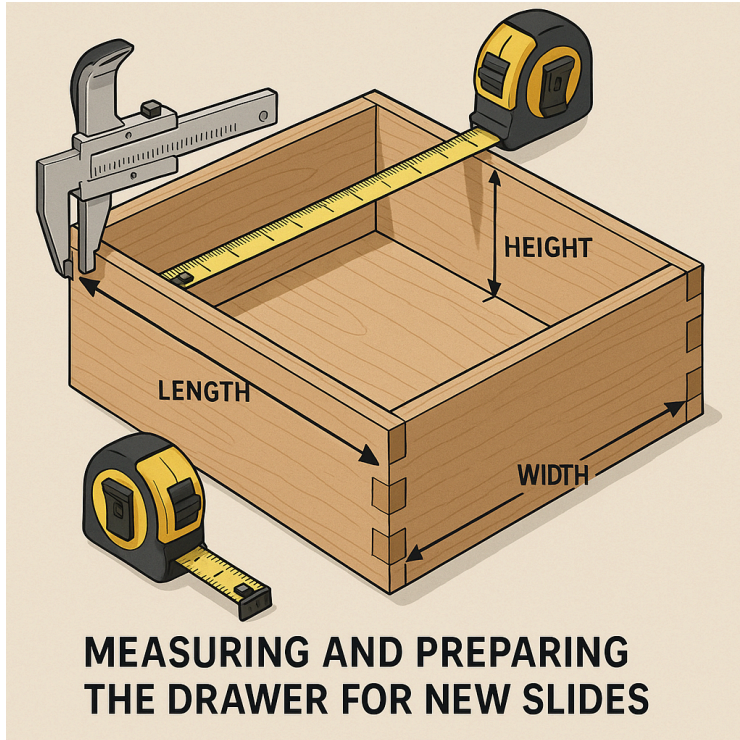
- Drill
- Drill bits
- Screws
- Measuring tape
- Level
- Screwdriver
- Pencil
- Drawer slide kit
- Drilling guide (optional)
- Drawer slide jig (optional)

How To Install Side-Mount Drawer Slides: Step-by-Step Installation Guide

Before you start measuring and installing your drawer slides, prepare your work area. Make sure you have a clean area to rest your drawers during installation. Gather all of your supplies so everything is in easy reach.

1. Measure and Prepare the Drawer for New Slides

Before ordering or purchasing new drawer slides, you need to measure the length, width, and height of your drawer. The length measurement will determine how long the drawer slides need to be. Measuring the height and width will make sure that there is enough clearance for the slides to work properly. For instance, if you're [measuring dovetail drawers](#) with side-mount slides, you should deduct 1-1/16" off of the cabinet opening width and 1/2" off of the rough opening height to leave room for side-mount slides.

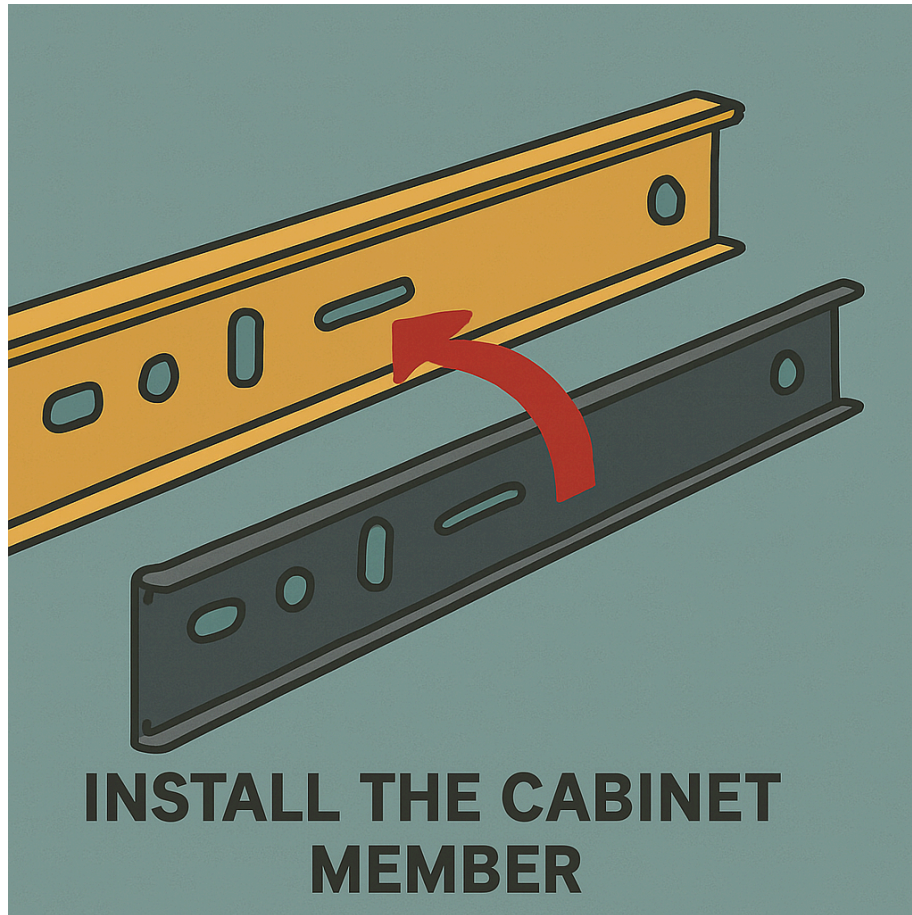


2. Remove Old Drawer Slides (If Applicable)

If the drawer has existing slides already mounted, then using the drill or screwdriver, remove the existing drawer slides from the drawer and the cabinet. You can take one of these slides with you when you purchase the new slides to make sure they're compatible with the drawers.

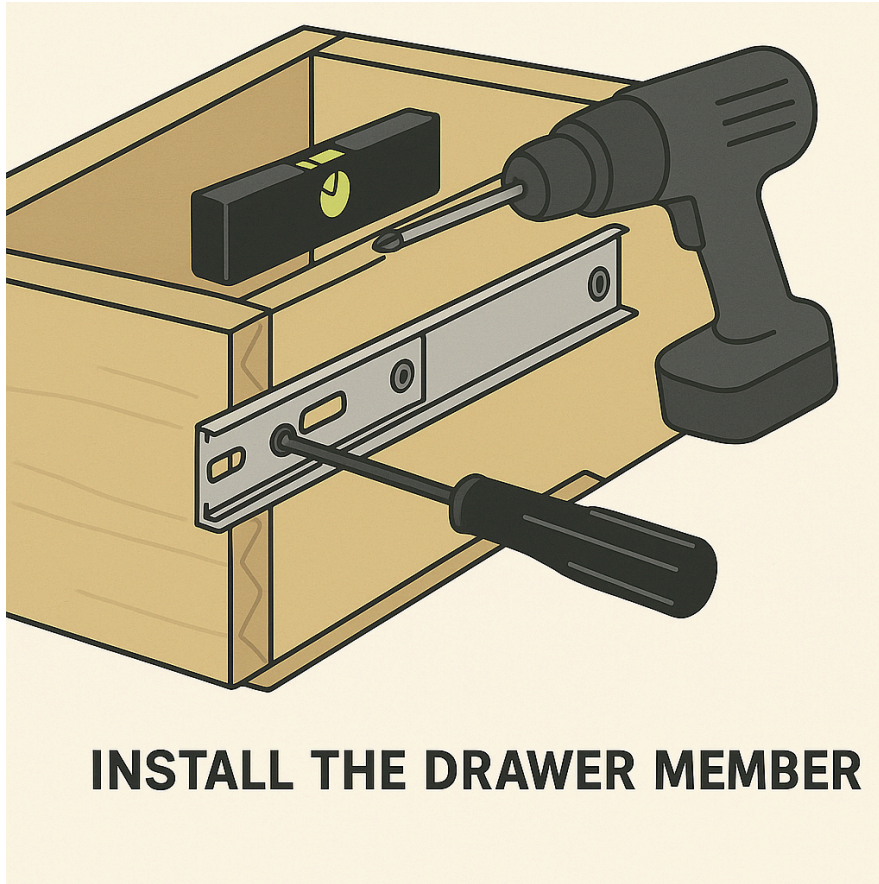
3. Install the Cabinet Member

Separate the drawer and cabinet member and mark the location on the cabinet where the slide will be installed. Start by screwing the cabinet member to the cabinet using the horizontal slots, which allow you to adjust the position before screwing into the permanent holes. As you adjust the cabinet member, use your level to make sure it's positioned properly.



4. Install the Drawer Member

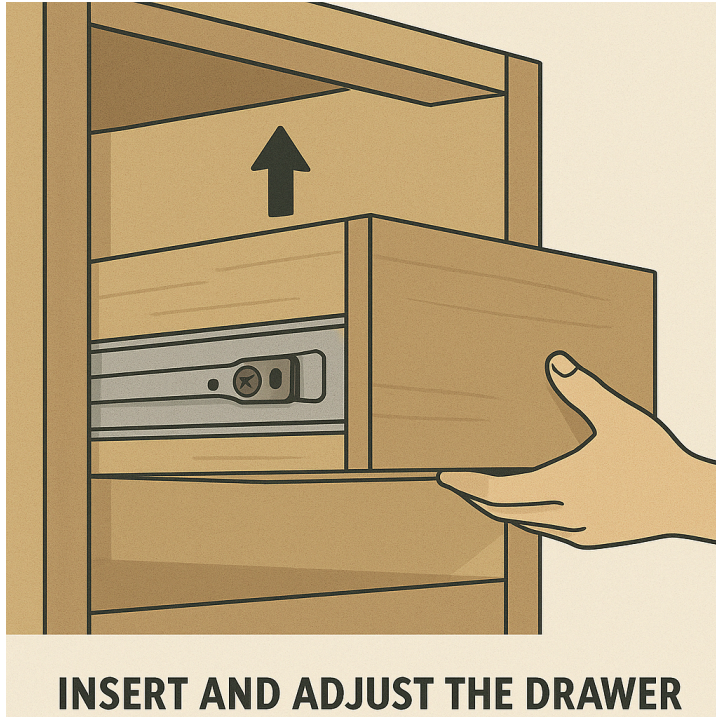
Next, you'll mark the location of the drawer member on the drawer and install it the way that you installed the cabinet member, using the horizontal slots first. Once it's in the right position, screw the screws into the permanent holes, using the level to make sure it's in the right place.



INSTALL THE DRAWER MEMBER

5. Insert and Adjust the Drawer

Check to see that the drawer slides smoothly and is aligned the right way. If there are any issues, you'll need to make minor adjustments. Undermount slides typically come with features that allow you to adjust the drawer side-to-side and up and down. Some adjustments may require a screwdriver, depending on the drawer slide itself. After you check the alignment, give the drawer a few test slides. If it slides smoothly, you're done! If it doesn't, readjust and try again.



Common Mistakes to Avoid

Drawer slide installation is relatively simple, but knowing what to avoid makes it even easier.

- **Leave enough clearance.** Make sure to measure the drawers' width and height and check to make sure there will be enough clearance to open and close the drawer when the slides are installed.
- **Pre-drill pilot holes to avoid splitting.** Using a drill bit to pre-drill holes prevents the wood from splitting.
- **Allow for adjustments.** Use slotted holes to adjust the slide before using the permanent holes.
- **Level the slides, so the drawer can slide smoothly.**

Choose Eagle Woodworking for Your Drawers and Drawer Slides

As you can see, installing side-mount drawer slides can be done quickly and easily. This means that you can stop wrestling with your drawers every time you need a fork or a kitchen towel. For larger projects, you can work with a contractor. For their projects, contractors often [outsource cabinet components](#) to lower costs and increase profits, and we're proud to work with a number of contractors to meet their drawer needs.

Eagle Woodworking offers precision-crafted doors and drawers, and we receive high ratings for quality and timeliness when contractors use our products. Not only do we manufacture [dovetail](#)

[drawers](#), but we also offer [multiple drawer slide options](#) for your project. When you're ready to discuss your project, [contact us](#) or fill out our [online quote form](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it better to put drawer slides on top or bottom?

Undermount drawer slides are stronger and more stable than side-mount drawer slides, but they're also more expensive. For kitchen or bathroom cabinet drawers, side-mount slides will typically be strong enough to handle what's in the drawers. For heavy-duty drawer needs, like in a shop or for drawers that hold small appliances, undermount slides are a better choice.

How do I measure for the correct drawer slide size?

Measuring for the correct drawer slide size is important for choosing the right drawer slides and for them to work correctly. First, make sure you know the drawer side thickness. Then, measure the drawer outside width and the cabinet opening width. You'll also need to measure the drawer depth and length. Refer to the hardware manufacturer's instructions to find the exact clearance requirements.

How can I ensure the slides are aligned properly?

To ensure drawer slides are aligned properly, start with proper measurements that account for clearance between the drawer and the cabinet. When you install the slides, use a level to make sure the slides are level. This will let them slide smoothly. Follow the manufacturer's directions for positioning and make sure to follow directions for either keeping the slides flush with the drawer or moving them into the correct position.

What should I do if the drawer does not glide smoothly after installation?

If the drawer doesn't glide smoothly after installation, start by checking the level and making sure that the drawer slide is in the right position. You can also make sure the screws are tight because loose screws can mean the slide isn't stable, which can lead to trouble opening and closing the drawer. Finally, make sure there's enough clearance between the drawer and the cabinet. If there's not, then you'll need to choose a drawer slide that allows for proper clearance.