



INSTALLING A PEDESTAL SINK

Whether your decision is based on style or space considerations, you may prefer a pedestal sink for your bathroom. This style of sink consists of two pieces – the sink basin itself and the stand (“pedestal”) beneath it. The plumbing fits inside the pedestal, which rests on the floor. The sink rests on the pedestal and is mounted to the wall for added support.



Most of today’s sinks are made from vitreous china, a glass-like porcelain, and are available in many sizes, styles, and colors. Be sure to open the box and inspect the parts when you first bring them home, so you can replace any damaged pieces before you’re ready to put them in place. Since three different faucet hole placements are common in pedestal sinks, make sure that the sink and faucet you choose have the same hole arrangement.

Your first step will be to remove the old sink. Turn off the water supply, and run the faucet to make sure all water is drained from the lines. Remove the trap from the sink basin and empty it into a bucket. Then, disconnect the hot and cold water supply lines and the drain under the sink. Finally, remove the hardware attaching the sink, and lift it straight up off the bracket.

Before you install the new sink, look at the wall and floor area where the sink will be located. Depending on the style of sink you’re replacing, problem areas may be exposed – missing floor tiles and/or baseboards, holes in the wall, etc. These should be repaired before you put the new sink in place.

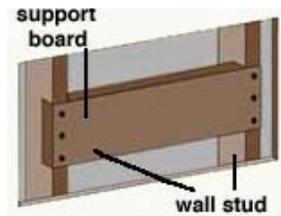
You should also check to see whether any changes must be made to the water supply or drain lines to accommodate the new sink. Pedestal sinks will look best if these lines are centered and partially concealed by the pedestal base. (Manufacturers generally enclose information on the best locations for the plumbing lines.) Also, make sure the existing waste pipe will be high enough to add the trap. If you must move the pipes or make other changes, you’ll need to open up the wall (and patch it afterwards). Usually, it’s easiest to use PVC for the drain lines; you can connect it to old copper or iron pipe with transition couplings. Even if you don’t need to relocate the pipes in the wall, you may need to shorten the drainpipe that extends out of the wall or replace shutoff valves if they’re too long.



The sink basin will either mount directly to the wall or onto a bracket (usually provided by the manufacturer) that you attach to the wall. If your wall is covered with ceramic tile *on a mortar base*, it will probably be strong enough to support the sink. On the other hand, if the wall is plaster or drywall (even with tile or paneling covering it), the sink will need to be secured to the wood framing.

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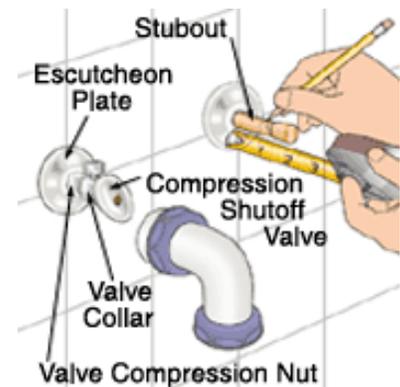
If you are very lucky, the mounting holes for the sink will align with the wall studs. In most cases, however, you will need to add a support board between the studs to hold the weight of the sink. Cut a hole in the wall between the studs and mount a wooden block (the size of the board will usually be specified in the manufacturer's instructions) between the studs at the height of the bracket. Notch the studs and nail or screw the support board in place, flush with the studs. Patch the wall with water-resistant drywall ("greenboard").



Once the wall support is prepared, set the pedestal in place on the floor and mark its location. It should be lined up with the waste pipe, with the center about the same distance from the wall as the center of the basin's drain. Carefully set the sink atop the pedestal and make sure it is level, both from side to side and from front to back. (If you don't have a helper to hold the sink securely, you can prop it up with 2x4's placed between the sink and the floor on either side of the pedestal.) If the parts move too much when you are positioning them, use plastic shims under the pedestal to keep it from rocking and foam pads under the sink bowl to level it, before marking the position of the mounting holes on the wall. After you have completed the installation, you can fill any gaps at the floor or between the sink basin and the pedestal with silicone caulk.

If the sink will be bolted directly to the wall, mark the location of the sink mounting holes, and drill pilot holes. If you are drilling into ceramic tile, use a masonry bit and put a piece of tape on the tile where you'll be drilling to keep the bit from slipping off center. For sinks that are installed using a wall bracket, draw a line along the top of the sink, remove the sink basin, and mark a second line for the bracket at the height specified by the manufacturer. (Make sure the line is level.) Hold the bracket in place and mark the holes for drilling. Attach the bracket to the wall with lag screws or other fastener specified in the installation directions.

Set the sink basin and pedestal aside and turn to the supply lines coming through the wall. You'll generally need to cut them with a tubing cutter and install new shutoff valves (compression fittings are a lot easier than soldering, but more expensive). Be sure that the stubouts that protrude from the wall are the right length; they must extend beyond the escutcheon plate far enough to attach the valve compression nut and the valve collar. Usually, cutting them about 2" from the wall will be right, but – since having them too short would be disastrous – you might even allow a little extra length. On the other hand, the supply stop handles should not extend more than 3" from the wall when open.



With the shutoff valves prepared, attach the faucet and pop-up drain assembly to the sink basin (follow the installation instructions that come with the faucet). One-piece faucets are much easier to install than models where you need to connect separate pieces with tubes. Mount the faucet to the sink; with some faucets, you use a gasket, and with others, plumber's putty. Connect the supply tubes to the faucet inlets (flexible braided stainless-steel will be easier to use than rigid metal); while an adjustable wrench will work to tighten the nuts, you will put much less stress on the piping if you use two wrenches working against each other – one to hold the valve and the other to tighten the nut.

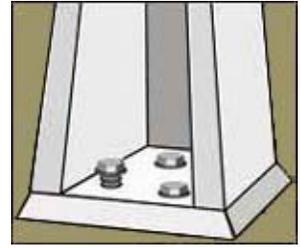
The last piece to add to the sink is the tailpiece, the piece that connects to the drain. Insert the flange through the drain hole in the basin from above, and seal it with a ring of plumber's putty. Tighten the lock ring on the bottom of the sink, secured to the wood framing.

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Now, it's time to make your final connections. This step is where an extra person can be particularly helpful, so one of you can lift and position the fixture while the other lines up and connects the pipes. As you work, remember two things: first, be sure to refer to the manufacturer's instructions for the order of the steps you should take, as they may be different from one sink model to another; second, take care when tightening bolts, nuts, and other hardware, as the sink or pedestal can crack if too much pressure is applied.

Generally speaking, if your sink attaches to a hanger bracket, pick up the basin and slide it onto the bracket. Check underneath to see if any adjustments are needed to the drain, trap, and water supply tubes; if so, remove the sink, make the alignment changes, and then replace the basin on the bracket. Put the pedestal in place under the sink (you can use a piece of cardboard to protect the floor as you slide it into position).

For basins that connect directly to the wall, reposition the pedestal and sink and attach the sink to the wall with the fasteners specified by the manufacturer (usually, bolts or lag screws). Mark the position of any bolts that will secure the pedestal to the floor (some pedestals are not bolted down, but only require caulking), remove the pedestal and drill pilot holes for the fasteners. If you have a tile floor, drill into the grout rather than the tile, if at all possible.



Install the P-trap assembly and connect it to the sink tailpiece and the PVC trap adapter. Also, hook up the water supply lines to the faucet. With some sinks, you do these steps before moving the pedestal back into position; with others, you must rest the bowl on the pedestal, close to the wall, and hook up these lines before securing the sink to the wall. When everything is connected, you can move the pedestal back into place and secure it to the floor with the fasteners specified. (You may want to test the water and drain lines for leaks before you make the final connections.) Your last step will be to run a bead of silicone caulk along the top of the sink where it meets the wall, and along the bottom of the pedestal where it meets the floor.