



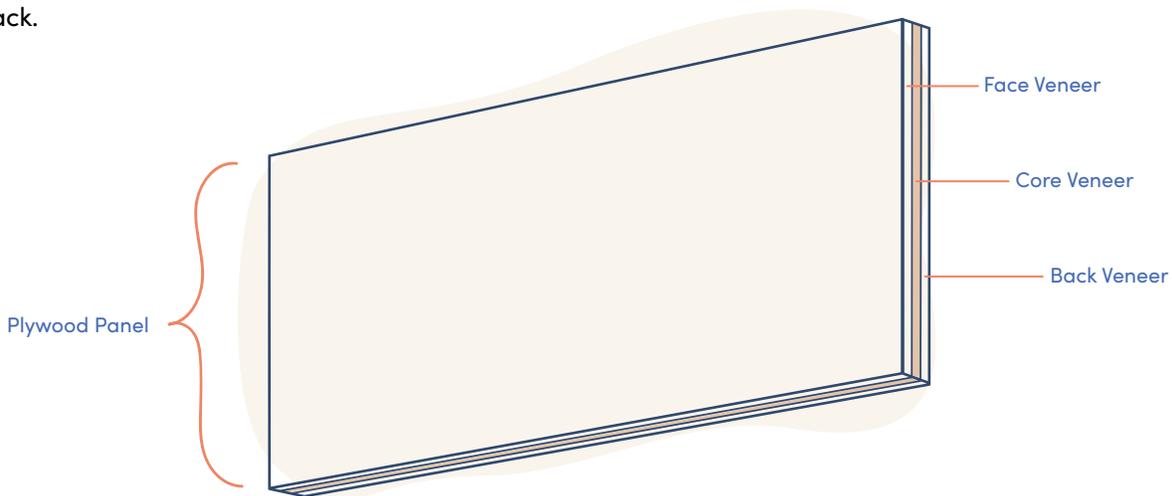
PLYWOOD FAQs

Searching for more? Visit handprintmade.com/FAQs

The Basics

What is Plywood?

Plywood is a sheet or panel made by gluing multiple, thin layers of wood together in a very tight stack.



What's a veneer?

Veneer is another word for ply, as in, the plies used to make plywood. Every piece of plywood has three kinds of veneers: face, back, and core. The face and back veneers are the outermost layers, made from whatever kind of wood is in the name. Our plywood's inner plies (core veneers) are made from a combination of different hardwood and softwood species.

How thick are the two outer plies (the face and back veneers)?

Industry-wide, face and back veneers average approximately $\frac{1}{30}$ ". Handprint birch plywood, for example, has $\frac{1}{32}$ " face and back veneers.

The Basics

How many plies are in each thickness of plywood?

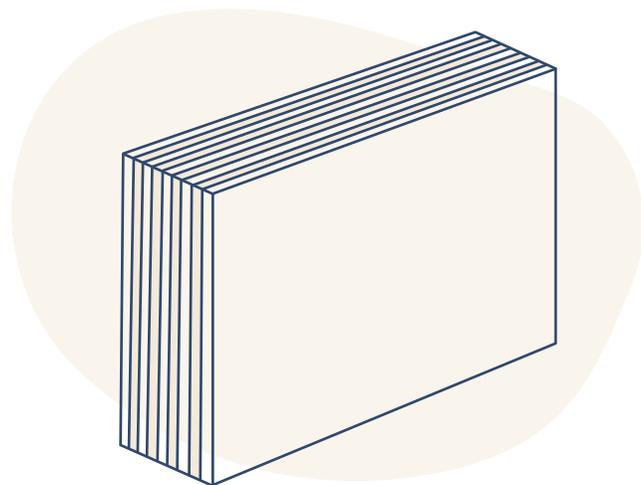
In general, the more plies, the stronger the panel. The number of plies will vary depending on the tree but typically, $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood has 3-5 plies, $\frac{1}{2}$ " has 5-7, and $\frac{3}{4}$ " has 7-9.

What are the inner plies (the core veneers) made of?

The most common species used to make core veneers varies from region to region. In the western US and Canada, it's typically fir or pine. In the east and central, it's most often poplar. And in the north and northeast, it's usually aspen.

Is Handprint birch plywood the same as Baltic Birch plywood?

In short, no. Baltic Birch is a specialty plywood originally created for cabinet makers. It's plies are thicker and all made from 100% birch. Birch plywood has thinner plies which are different species- anything from pine to poplar. We find Birch plywood offers the same great look and benefits as Baltic Birch, but can be more cost effective for a maker's budget.



How can I tell how much plywood weighs?

There are many variables that factor into the weight of any piece of plywood. You can find a specifications section on almost every retailer's website product page that tells details like weight, dimensions, etc.

How much weight can each thickness of plywood hold?

There are many variables that determine the weight any piece of plywood can hold. And more important is the type and location of the support. Here are some basic guidelines and two examples we hope are helpful:

- Plywood with fewer than 4 layers has the least strength and should not be relied on to hold much weight without support
- Plywood with 4-7 layers is moderately strong and can be used (with the right support) for shelves, cabinets, and most other home projects
- Plywood with more than 7 layers is the strongest and can be used for heavy-duty projects

Examples:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ " 2' x 4' birch plywood - supported only at the short ends - can hold about 30-40 lbs. evenly spread across it
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " 2' x 2' birch plywood - unsupported - can hold 50-100 lbs. all on its own

Can Handprint plywood be bent?

Handprint doesn't currently offer the kind of plywood made for bending.

The Basics

Why is there a little hole in the edge of my plywood?

Voids are naturally occurring empty spots that can sometimes be found between the plies of any plywood. A void does not change the quality of strength of the plywood but may be visually unappealing for the project you had in mind. Wood putty (also called wood patching compound) can be used to fill voids in your plywood. It's easy to use, is sandable, and paintable. Simply follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Can Handprint products be used for outside projects?

Any wood that isn't pressure-treated or marine grade isn't going to last long outdoors without a weather-protectant sealer. Most projects made from hardwood, BC pine, CDX pine, OSB, and underlayment can be used successfully in a protected outdoor space. Avoid using MDF, pegboard, chalkboard, markerboard, and tempered hardboard outdoors. These absorb moisture and expand.

What's the difference between nominal and actual dimensions, and how do you know what the actual dimensions really are?

Nominal dimensions are the sizes wood products are commonly called, as well as the size of the wood before it was cut, sanded, planed, surfaced, etc. The actual measurements are just that – the ACTUAL measurements of the final size. You can find a specifications section on almost every retailer's website product page that tells details like actual dimensions, weight, and more.

How do I hide the plies around the edges of my plywood?

The two most common ways to hide the plies around the edges are with edge banding or screen molding.

Edge banding is fast, inexpensive, and easy. It's also flexible and great for covering curved edges.

Screen molding is a thin strip of wood made in widths that match the most common thickness of plywood. The screen molding is tacked along the plywood edge using small finishing nails. This technique is best suited for straight exposed edges.

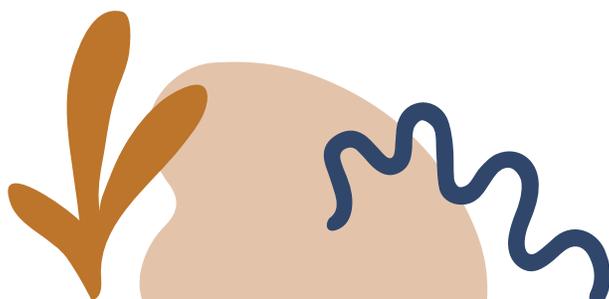
Are plywood Project Panels good for floors, cabinets, and interior walls?

Yes, these smaller panels are great for a variety of build, repair, and create projects. These panels are easier to transport and handle than a 4 x 8 sheet and generate less waste.

When choosing plywood, underlayment, or OSB for flooring, consider the size of your project. If it's important to have as few joints as possible, choose 4' x 8' sheets instead.

Will the climate affect my wood before starting my project?

We attempt to minimize the expansion and contraction caused by temperature and humidity changes by kiln-drying our wood to stabilize it. However, the climate in your home may still affect its behavior. We recommend storing wood wherever the conditions in your home are most consistent, then acclimatizing it for a few days in the room it will be used in before starting your project.



Miscellaneous

What's the best hardware for mounting decor to different types of wall material?

Paneling

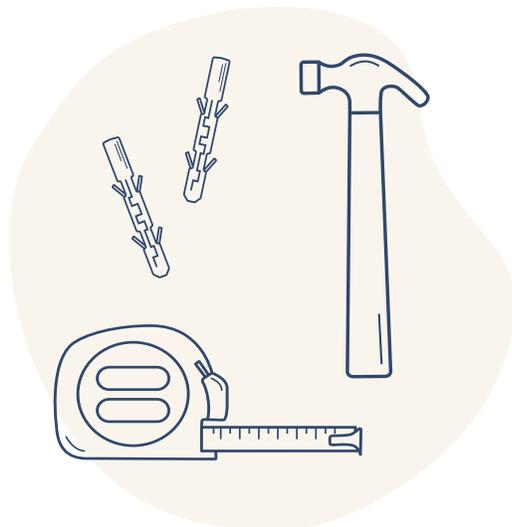
Wood is the easiest surface to mount decor to. Depending on the hardware on the back of your artwork, all you may need is a small nail or a standard wood screw or two. Or, you might want to use an ordinary metal picture hanger and a nail. Check the weight limit stated on the packaging, and use two hangers whenever needed or when in doubt.

Brick and concrete

Special wall anchors, called lead wall plugs, are available for concrete block and brick walls. To create a hole for the plug, use a power drill with a carbide-tipped bit.

Drywall

If you're hanging a large, heavy piece, fasten it into this lumber behind the drywall (called studs). Studs are strong enough to hold any decor. However, if your piece is medium to light weight, you don't necessarily need to find a stud to nail or screw into. Instead, use wall anchors. They're available in various sizes and designed especially for drywall.



Can Handprint products be used for outside projects?

Any wood that isn't pressure-treated or marine grade isn't going to last long outdoors without a weather-protectant sealer. Most projects made from hardwood, BC pine, CDX pine, OSB, and underlayment can be used successfully in a protected outdoor space. Avoid using MDF, pegboard, chalkboard, markerboard, and tempered hardboard outdoors. These absorb moisture and expand.

What's the difference between nominal and actual dimensions, and how do you know what the actual dimensions really are?

Nominal dimensions are the sizes wood products are commonly called, as well as the size of the wood before it was cut, sanded, planed, surfaced, etc. The actual measurements are just that – the ACTUAL measurements of the final size. You can find a specifications section on almost every retailer's website product page that tells details like actual dimensions, weight, and more.

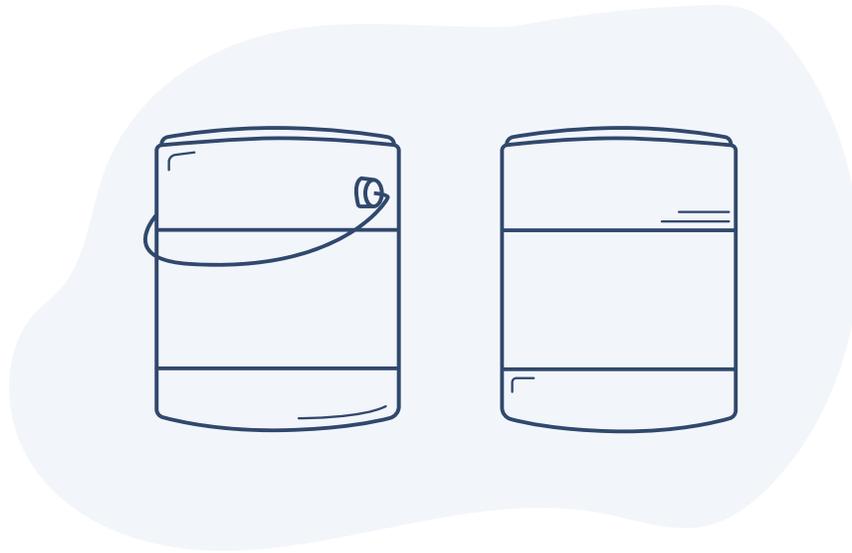
Are Handprint wood products ethically sourced? What's their country of origin?

While we source both domestically and internationally, the ethical sourcing of our products is extremely important to us, and it begins by choosing suppliers who are as committed to environmentally sound practices as we are. By working with suppliers who share our sense of stewardship, we're proud to support the Social & Environmental Responsibility (SER) Standards under which wood manufacturers are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Protecting Your Projects

What's the difference between polyurethane and polycrylic?

Both products protect projects. Applied to natural, painted, or stained wood, polyurethane and polycrylic both increase durability as well as moisture and heat resistance. They also both allow you to choose your desired sheen. However, here's how they're different:



POLYCRYLIC

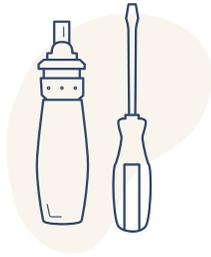
- Is water-based only
- Has a mild scent, is safe enough to use without protective gear, and requires no special storage
- Dries completely clear
- Cannot be tinted
- Has a runnier consistency, dries very quickly, and requires multiple thin coats to get even coverage and prevent drips and runs
- Cleans up easily with soap and water
- Is generally less expensive

POLYURETHANE

- Comes in two types, oil-based and water-based
- Oil-based polyurethane is the most durable, but both kinds of polyurethane are much more toxic and dangerous than polycrylic
- Oil-based polyurethane can tend to dry with a slightly yellowish tinge; water-based polyurethane dries clear
- Can be tinted
- Is thicker, dries more slowly, and is less likely to drip and run, making it better for covering large surface areas

Tool Choices

What's the difference between an electric screwdriver, a power drill, a drill driver, and an impact driver? How do you choose?



Electric screwdriver

A battery-operated tool used to fasten screws into surfaces using various bits (Phillips, straight, star, etc.) that fit into the various types of screwheads. While a power drill can also fasten screws, either a manual or an electric screwdriver offers more precision and better control over speed. For small, quick home projects and repairs, the humble screwdriver is still your go-to tool.



Power drill

A power drill is best suited for drilling holes into or through materials like wood, metal, tile, etc. and can also drive in screws. Use a power drill when speed and power is desired over precision.



Drill driver

A power drill specifically made to be good at both drilling and driving in screws. The most important feature of this tool is its variable speed – high for drilling, low for fastening. While quite versatile, a drill driver isn't made for heavy-duty fastening or large screws, but it's perfect for maker-sized projects!



Impact driver

A heavy-duty tool that is best for bigger projects, large repairs, and construction. The impact driver is strong and fast, but not very precise.