



Estimating Material Take Offs in Home Designer

Reference Number: **KB-00453**

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This article also applies to the following legacy products:
Pro

QUESTION

Where do the materials on the materials list come from in Home Designer?

ANSWER

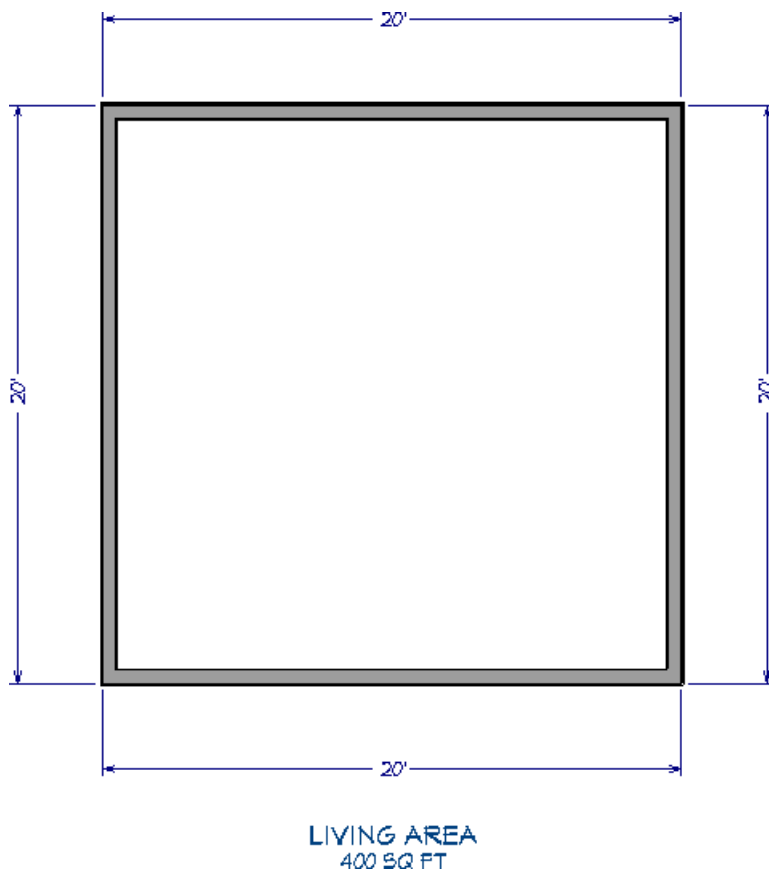
In Home Designer 2026 and newer, as well as in Home Designer Pro versions, the materials list will provide a materials take off list for your model. In this article, you will learn some of the places where materials are configured, and how to create a materials list for quantity and cost estimation.

The materials list will only be as accurate as the model you have created. The more accurate and detailed your model, the more accurate the estimation will be.



The materials list is based on certain assumptions which may or may not match your building style. Chief Architect Inc. makes no representation as to the accuracy or reliability of the materials list generated by Chief Architect or Home Designer.

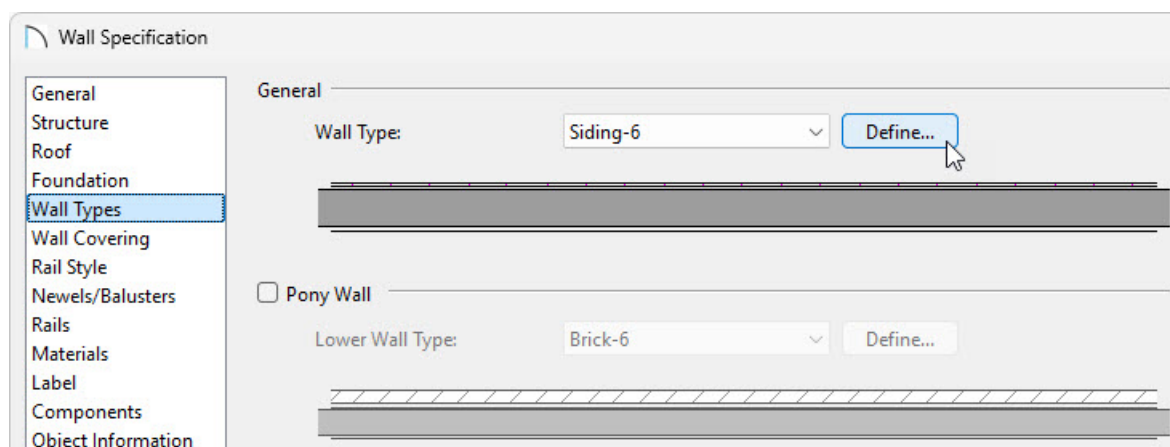
Always compare the materials list with a manual take off before providing a quote or ordering material for a job.

In the example below, we will generate a basic quantity estimation based on a single four-walled room with 20 foot walls on each side.



To examine wall materials and structure

1. Use the **Select Objects**  tool to select one of the exterior walls, then click on the **Open Object**  edit button to display the **Wall Specification** dialog.
2. On the **WALL TYPES** panel, click the **Define** button next to the Wall Type drop-down menu.



3. In the **Wall Type Definitions** dialog that opens, you can see that the wall is broken down into layers.

Wall Type Definitions

Siding-6 [New] [Copy] [Rename] [Delete] [Delete All Unused]

Wall Layers

Layer #	Line Color	Line Style	Weight	Material	Pattern	Texture	Fill	Thickness
Exterior Layers								
1			1	Fiber Siding ...				1/2"
2			1	Housewrap				0"
3			1	OSB Horizontal				7/16"
Main Layers								
4			35	Fir Framing 2				5 1/2"
Interior Layers								
5			1	Drywall		No Texture		1/2"

Insert Above
Insert Below
Move Up
Move Down
Delete

Total Thickness:
6 15/16"

Material Properties | Layer Properties | Wall Properties

☒ Framing

Stud Construction: Wall Framing [Define...]

Horizontal Framing ☐

Stud Width: 1 1/2" [Up] [Down]

Stud Spacing: 24" [Up] [Down] On Center

Top Plate Construction: Match Stud Default [Define...]

Top Plate Width: 1 1/2" [Up] [Down]

Top Plate Count: 2 [Up] [Down]

Bottom Plate Construction: Match Stud Default [Define...]

Bottom Plate Width: 1 1/2" [Up] [Down]

Bottom Plate Count: 1 [Up] [Down]

☐ Max Plate Length: 144" [Up] [Down]

☐ Air Gap

- Each layer will have a **Thickness**, which will affect how the material is reported in your Materials List.
- The **Framing** checkbox will tell the software to create framing with the selected material. Here you can adjust the **Stud Width**, **Stud Spacing**, and **Top/Bottom Plate** settings.
- The **Air Gap** checkbox when selected will prevent the select layer from displaying in 3D views or being calculated in your Materials List.

Note: For more information on modifying wall types, please see the [Related Articles](#) section below.

- Click **Cancel** to return to the **Wall Specification**.
- Now, select the **COMPONENTS** panel and notice that the wall layers we just saw are listed here as well, along with some additional information such as ID, Size, Description, etc.

The information on this panel is what is reported to the materials list. This information is supplied by what is already specified in the dialog, but you can also manually edit this information to your liking.

The screenshot shows the 'Wall Specification' dialog box with the 'Components' panel selected. The left sidebar lists various categories, with 'Components' highlighted. The main area displays a list of wall components: 'Wall', 'Wall - Main Part', 'Fiber Siding Neutral' (selected), 'Housewrap', 'OSB Horizontal', 'Drywall', and 'wall insulation'. To the right, a table provides details for the selected component.


	Value
ID	Siding
Sub Category	
Supplier	
Manufacturer	
Code	
Size	7" wide
Description	Fiber Siding Neutral
Count	321 ft
Extra	
Price	
% Markup	0
Labor	0
Equipment	0
Total Cost	\$0.00
Comment	
Label	
Accounting Code	3400 - Exterior siding

You can modify most all of the Value fields listed on the Components panel. To learn more about this dialog panel, select the Help button at the bottom.

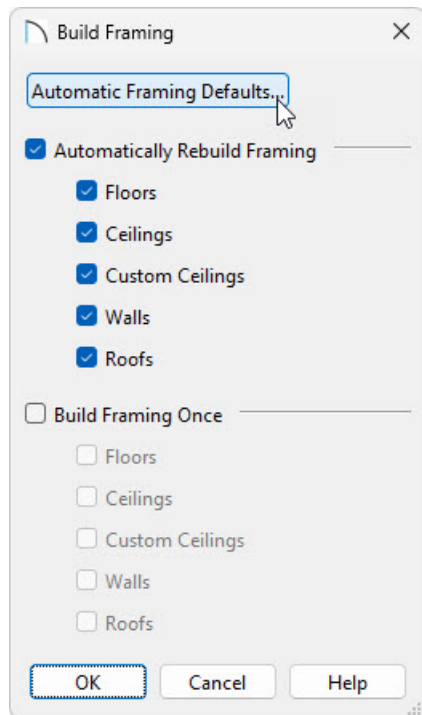
- Click **Cancel** to close the dialog without making any changes.

Now let's look more closely at framing.

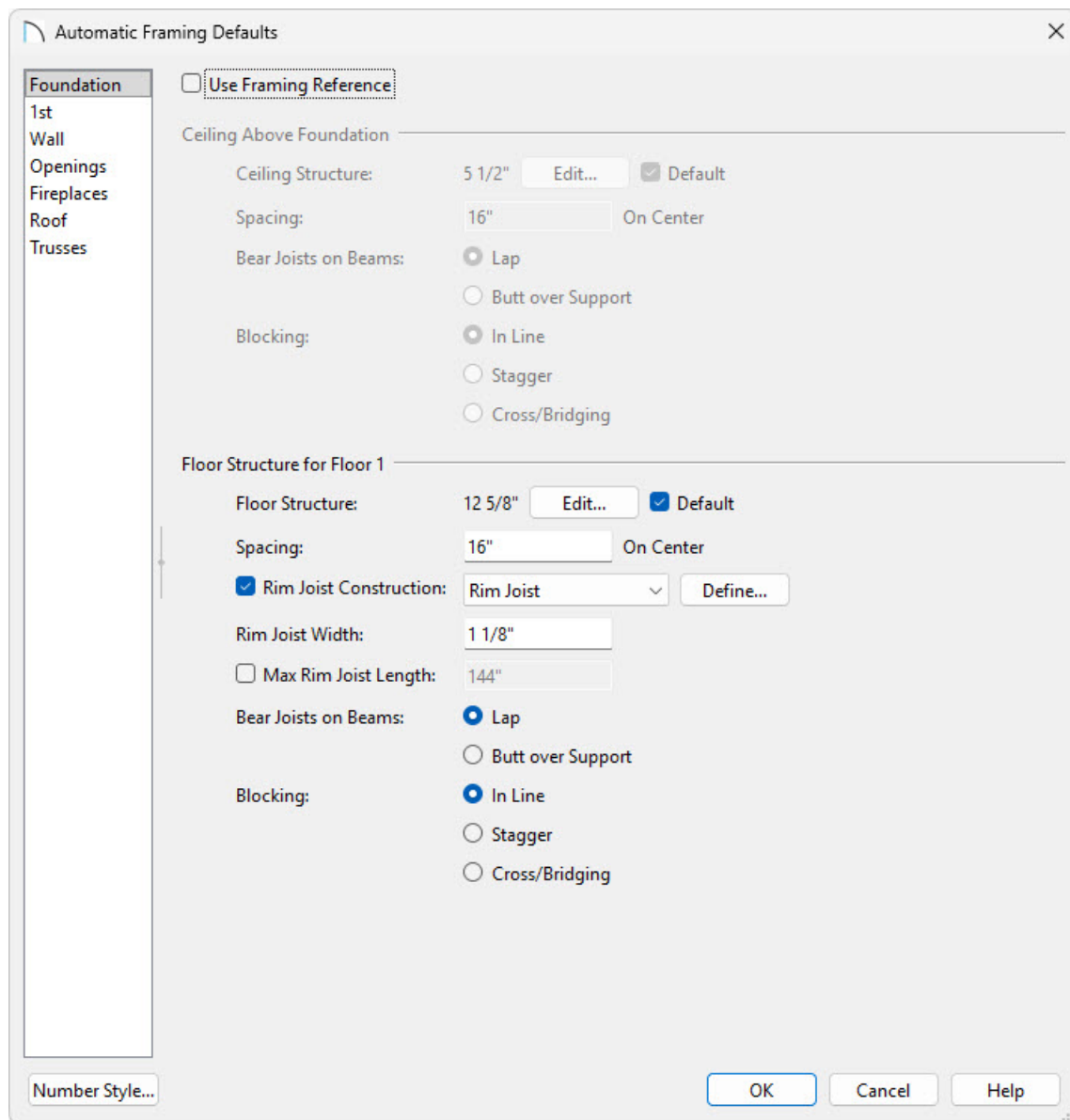
To examine framing materials

1. Select **Build> Framing> Build Framing**  to display the **Build Framing** dialog.
2. In the **Build Framing** dialog click **Automatic Framing Defaults** to open the **Automatic Framing Defaults** dialog.

In Home Designer 2024 and prior, skip to Step 3.



3. In the **Automatic Framing Defaults** dialog:



- On the **FOUNDATION**, **1ST**, **2ND**, etc panels you can adjust how both your floors and ceiling are built. You can adjust the **Spacing**, control the **Rim Joists**, and make edits to your **Floor Structure** and **Ceiling Structure**.
- On the **WALL** panel you can adjust the defaults for your **Studs**, your **Wall Connections**, your wall **Plates**, how your **Blocking** will generate, your **Girts**, and the **Miter Ends of Angled Walls**. Remember that you can also edit your wall framing through your Wall Type, as mentioned above.
- On the **OPENINGS** panel you can adjust your **Header Sizes**, your **Bay/Box/Bow Window Trimmers**, how headers report to the **Materials Lists**, and how your headers show in **Plan Views**.
- on the **ROOF** panel you can adjust how your roof will frame. This includes the size for your different roof framing components and their **Spacing**. You can also make these changes in a **Roof Plane Specification** for finer control.



- On the **Trusses** panel you can adjust your **Roof Truss Defaults**, **Roof Girder Truss Defaults***, and **Floor Truss Defaults**.

**Available in Home Designer 2026 and newer*

For more information about the various options on these panels, click the Help button to open the software's documentation. For more information on generating framing in Home Designer, please see the [Related Articles \(https://kb.chiefarchitect.com/admin/index.php?/front/#Related\)](https://kb.chiefarchitect.com/admin/index.php?/front/#Related) section below.

After you have examined wall materials and framing, take a look at room materials.

To examine room materials

1. Use the **Select Objects**  tool to select the room enclosed by the exterior, then click on the **Open Object**  edit button to display the **Room Specification** dialog.
2. On the **STRUCTURE** panel:

Room Specification

General
Structure
Deck
Deck Support
Moldings
Wall Covering
Fill Style
Materials
Components

Absolute Elevations

Floor Above:

Ceiling: 109 1/8"

Floor: 0"

Floor Below: -46 1/8"

Relative Heights

Rough Ceiling: 109 1/8"

Finished Ceiling: 107 5/8"

SWT To Ceiling: 109 1/8"

Ceiling Below: 33 1/2"

Stem Wall: 36"

SWT = Stem Wall Top

Ceiling

☒ Roof Over This Room
☒ Flat Ceiling Over This Room
☐ Shelf Ceiling
☐ Use Soffit Surface for Ceiling

Ceiling Structure: 5 1/2" ☒ Default

Ceiling Finish: 5/8" ☒ Default

Floor

☒ Floor Under This Room
☐ Floor Supplied by the Foundation Room Below
☐ Monolithic Slab Foundation
☒ Build Foundation Below

Floor Finish: 7/8" ☒ Default

On Structure Resize: ☒ Lock Floor Top ☐ Lock Floor Bottom

Floor Structure: 12 5/8" ☒ Default

- Click the **Edit** button next to Ceiling Structure to open the **Ceiling Structure Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the ceiling platform.
- Click the **Edit** button next to Ceiling Finish to open the **Ceiling Finish Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the finished ceiling surface.
- Click the **Edit** button next to Floor Finish to open the **Floor Finish Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the floor surface.
- Click the **Edit** button next to Floor Structure to open the **Floor Structure Definition** dialog and define the layers of materials that form the floor platform.

Note: These properties can also be specified for the entire plan, for each individual floor level, or for specific room types by accessing the Default Settings.

3. Click on the **MATERIALS** panel to specify your desired materials for the moldings and wall coverings that are applied for the room, if applicable.
4. Much like with walls, you can select the **COMPONENTS** panel while in this dialog to see what will be reported to the materials list based upon what has been defined for the room.

These are only some of the important materials. Other designs will likely include roofing, windows, doors, cabinets, and other objects. For this simple design, however, you've seen where the materials can be set, so now it's time to do a quantity estimation.

To generate a material's list

1. Select **Tools> Materials List> Calculate Materials For All Floors** .

Note: There are additional tools to create materials lists of more specific areas of your plan. If you want to learn more, see [Video 2293: Materials Lists \(https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/videos/watch/2293/materials-lists.html\)](https://www.homedesignersoftware.com/videos/watch/2293/materials-lists.html).

2. Scroll to the bottom of the materials list, and locate the Interior Trim section, where you can see that there is 76 feet of base molding required.

	ID	Floor	Size	Description	Count	Extra
1	Interior Trim					
2	T1		1 5/8"x3 1/2"	Default Base Molding	76 ft	
3						
4						


3. Also take a look at the Wall Board, where you can see that you require 22 4' x 8' sheets of 1/2 inch Drywall for the walls.

You can also see another entry for 12 4' x 8' x 5/8 inch sheets used for the ceiling.

	ID	Floor	Size	Description	Count	Extra
1	Wall Board					
2	> WB1	1	48"x96"x1/2"	Drywall	22	
3	WB2	1	48"x96"x5/8"	Drywall	12	
4	WB3	1		Color - White	361.00 sq ft	
5						
6						




4. If you scroll back up, you can examine other categories, such as the Siding category.

	ID	Floor	Size	Description	Count	Extra
1	Siding					
2	> S1	1	4" wide	Lap Siding	2480 ft	
3	> S2	1		Housewrap	824.70 sq ft	
4	> S3	1	48"x96"x7/16"	OSB-Hrz	26	
5						
6						

To close the materials list, select **File> Close View**. You will be prompted to save it. Using saved materials lists, you can create quantity and cost estimations for various stages of your project, or you can create estimates for small subsections of the design for remodeling purposes. Specify a name, then click **Save** to close the materials list. To access this list in the future go to **Tools> Materials List> Materials List Management** .

Every saved materials list is a saved snapshot of the current state of the design. If you save the materials list and make changes to the design, you will need to regenerate a new materials list; the previously saved materials list will not update

Related Articles

-  [Controlling the Information that's Displayed in a Materials List in Home Designer \(/support/article/KB-00511/controlling-the-information-that-s-displayed-in-a-materials-list-in-home-designer.html\)](/support/article/KB-00511/controlling-the-information-that-s-displayed-in-a-materials-list-in-home-designer.html)
-  [Creating a Framing Cut/Buy List \(/support/article/KB-00182/creating-a-framing-cut-buy-list.html\)](/support/article/KB-00182/creating-a-framing-cut-buy-list.html)
-  [Creating a Materials List for an Event \(/support/article/KB-01000/creating-a-materials-list-for-an-event.html\)](/support/article/KB-01000/creating-a-materials-list-for-an-event.html)
-  [Defining a Wall Type in Home Designer \(/support/article/KB-00382/defining-a-wall-type-in-home-designer.html\)](/support/article/KB-00382/defining-a-wall-type-in-home-designer.html)

- 📄 [Entering Changes Into a Materials List \(/support/article/KB-00293/entering-changes-into-a-materials-list.html\)](/support/article/KB-00293/entering-changes-into-a-materials-list.html)
- 📄 [Generating Framing in Home Designer \(/support/article/KB-00462/generating-framing-in-home-designer.html\)](/support/article/KB-00462/generating-framing-in-home-designer.html)
- 📄 [Printing, Exporting, and Saving Materials Lists \(/support/article/KB-00275/printing-exporting-and-saving-materials-lists.html\)](/support/article/KB-00275/printing-exporting-and-saving-materials-lists.html)