



[How to Build The Ace Clubhouse](#)

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Every child dreams of having their very own special hideaway. With assistance from the helpful hardware folks at Ace Hardware you can make this dream come true! Just follow these step-by-step instructions to build the coolest clubhouse in the neighborhood!

Print out the blueprints and instructions, and look them over to familiarize yourself with the project. This is a great opportunity to share your carpentry skills with your child or to learn along with him. With that in mind, we have designed a clubhouse that the two of you can build together. Keep in mind that there are a few stages (such as raising the walls and roof) that require a second adult. This clubhouse is Deluxe with a capital D. It will take a few days to build, so its best to begin when you have a three- or four-day weekend available. This way you can complete the final steps of roofing and painting, without having to worry too much about the weather. If you think you' ll be spreading the project over a few weekends, you' ll need a 15' x 15' plastic tarp to cover your progress.

A variety of tools can be used for this project, but we found a few especially helpful. Our table saw came in handy for making the angle cuts for the studs and rafters (but you can use a circular saw if that's what you have). Also a portable jigsaw and cordless drill make things a lot easier.

The tools and hardware you need are available at your local Ace Hardware store. And if you have any questions, just ask one of the helpful hardware folks while you're there.

Photo 1



Materials:

- (4) 4'x5/8" plywood sheets
- (4) sheets of 5/8" paneling plywood (grooves)
- (34) 2x3"x8'-0" wall studs
- (30) 1"x3"x8'-0"

common pine boards

- (2) 1"x4"x8'-0" common pine boards
- (6) 2"x6"x8'-0" studs
- (1) 2"x6"x8'-0" wood stud
- (4) 3" door hinge
- 1 gallon Ace white latex outdoor house paint
- 1 gallon Ace yellow latex outdoor house paint
- 2 boxes of 2" wood screws
- 1 box of 3" wood screws
- (8) galvanized rafter hangers
- 1 box #8 galvanized nails
- 2 door hooks
- 10 outdoor deck spindles
- 3 flats asphalt roofing shingles
- (1) roll 15 lb. roofing felt
- (2) 3" ball fence post finials
- Paint brushes
- Circular or hand saw
- Cordless drill or screwdriver

Step One: Floor

Your clubhouse will have an 8' x 4' "footprint"; find a site this size that is level. If you need to, level a slight grade with a rake. Next start framing out the floor. Make a box on the ground using two of the 8' 2" x 3" s set on edge and two 2" x 3"s cut to 3' 9". Fasten these together at each corner with two 3" screws. This will give you a box exactly 8' x4' , the same size as your plywood flooring. Evenly space six additional 3' 9" 2"x3"s and fasten with 3" screws to complete the flooring framework (see photo 1). Place a sheet of plywood on top of the framework and fasten in place with 2" screws.



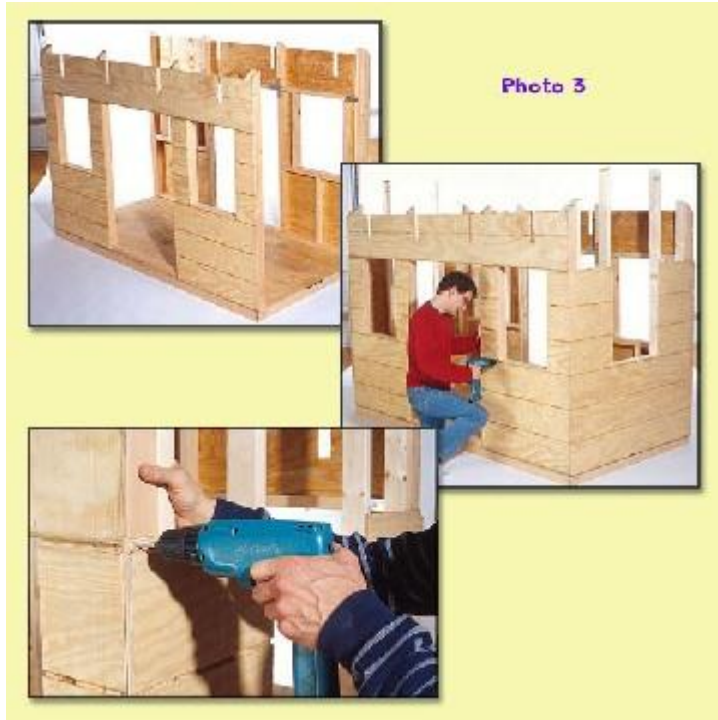
Step Two: Framing the Walls

The easiest way to do this is to begin with the plywood paneling, and use this as a guide for the placement of the studs. The front and back walls (with the door openings) are exactly the same, as are the two side walls. Begin with one of the front walls. Cut two pieces of paneling at 4'x2'x6". These will be used on either side of the doorway, so remember to

have the panel grooves running horizontally. (You will also want the tongue of the paneling at the top so that it will accept the groove of the piece that will run above the door for the entire length of the house.) Next, use your jigsaw to cut the window holes. This will leave you with two approximately U-shaped pieces of paneling. Now, rip another piece of paneling 8' long and 1' 3-1/4" wide, parallel with the panel grooves, for the top of the wall. Before going any further, it's a good idea to cut the notches for the four rafters into this top piece. Each notch is 1-1/2" wide and 5-1/4" deep. The two end notches have centers 12" from each end. The two center notches have centers 2' from the end notches.

Now it's time for the studs. There are six 2" x 3" studs. Each is cut to a 35 degree angle so that the longest side is 5' 1-7/8". Place an uncut 2" x 3" x 8' on the ground on edge. This will be the footer running the length of the wall. Then place four studs perpendicular to the footer, and space them out so that when you cover them with the two pieces of side paneling, you have a stud in either corner and one on either side of the doorway. Screw the paneling to the studs using 2" screws, and attach the studs to the footer using the 3" screws. We've chosen to double the corner studs for added strength. Stand the wall upright and screw a second stud beside each corner stud. While the wall is still upright, finish framing out the windows and the door header as seen in photo 2. Repeat this for the rear wall.

The side walls will be overlapped by the front and back walls. Because our floor is 4' wide in total, you must cut your first piece of paneling to 3' 6" wide. Again, use your jigsaw to cut a window notch, leaving you with a U-



shaped panel 4' tall. The side wall studs are a little trickier because they have to be cut to fit into the gable of the roof peak. This means that the two corner studs will have to be shorter than the two in the center. Again, the top of each stud should be cut at a 35° angle, but this time the angle should run left to right across the 2" side. A footer will run all the way across the side walls, 3' 6". As with the front wall, arrange your

footer and studs on the ground, and place your piece of paneling over them. (Note: because you must allow room for the front and rear wall studs, you must set your corner studs 3" in from each edge.) Screw your footer, studs and paneling together.

To save on paneling, we took the leftover piece cut from the front wall to make the upper portion of the side wall. There is an aesthetic benefit to this as well since the panel grooves will run vertically above the window, giving the clubhouse a barn-like appearance on each end. This piece should be cut to the same 3' 6" width. Now you must cut the peak. Although it is all one piece, you can picture this as a triangle sitting on top of a rectangle to make the measurements easier. Cut the panel and attach to the studs above the window. Finish framing out the window as shown in photo 3. Repeat for the other side wall.

You will need the help of another adult to assemble the four walls on the flooring. Stand the front wall upright on the floor and bring one of the side walls into place. Using 3" screws, attach the walls to each other as well as the flooring. Continue this process with the rear wall and the remaining side wall.

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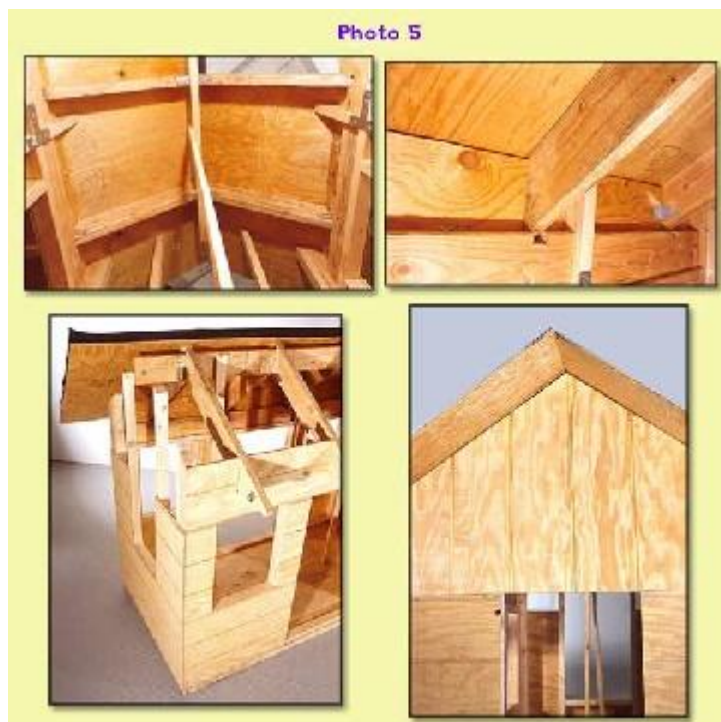
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Step 3: Building the roof

Various portions of the roof will require two adults to complete. The center roof beam is made from an uncut 2" x 6" x 8' . You must attach the roof beam from the peak of one side wall to the other. Raise it as high as it will go without protruding above the side walls, and screw it into place through the side wall paneling on both sides. Next, attach the eight angled joist hangers to the roof beam in an arrangement corresponding to the notches you cut in the front and rear walls (as described above).

The rafters are also 2" x 6"s, each with an end cut to 60 degrees in order to meet the roof beam. We chose to cut our rafters so they would be more or less even with the edge of the roof at 3' 1-1/2" Using the jigsaw, we cut a simple scroll curve to the end for decorative effect (See photo 4). You may want your rafters to extend beyond the edge of the roof, or you may want them hidden short of the roof. Therefore the length of the rafters can vary depending on your taste. Once you have the 8 rafters cut,

slip them into the joist hangers and through the notches you cut in the front and rear walls. Before you screw it into place, you should check to see that the rafter is flush with the top of the wall where it passes through the notch. If the rafter sits too high, there will be a gap between the roof and the wall. If you need to, you can cut the notch a little deeper with a hand saw. When all the rafters fit flush, screw them into the joist hangers (See photo 5). This is a good time to remind you not to worry if a few things don't fit perfectly. Regardless of your skill level, it's pretty common for there to be gaps here and there with all these angle cuts, and after all, that's why they invented trim.



For added support, we attached 2" x 6" pieces to the inside walls between the studs. You can attach the rafters to these using the L-brackets (See photo 6).

Now you are ready for the roof. As with the rafters, the extent of roof overhang is a matter of taste. You'll need a second adult for this part anyway, so you might want to experiment with different looks by sliding a piece of plywood back and forth on the rafters. Your child is the ultimate foreman on this job, so once he or she approves, simply cut the plywood to fit, and attach to the rafters using 2" screws.



Step 4: Shingles, Trim and Paint

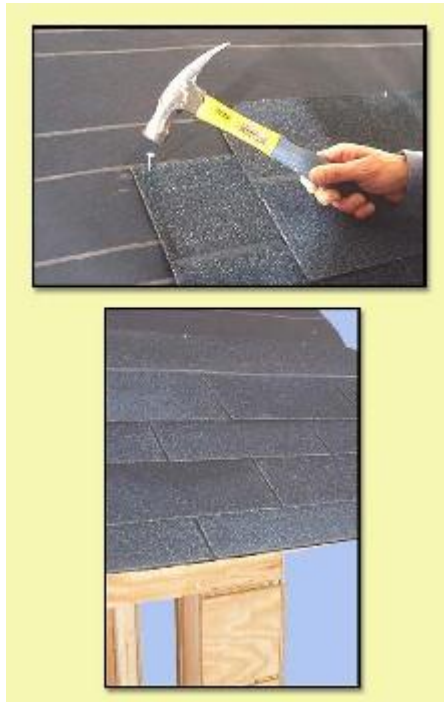
To protect the roof before shingling, it is important to cover it with roofing felt. Cut one piece for the bottom of each side and staple them into place. Use another sheet to cover the peak, overlapping the two side pieces. Shingling is relatively easy; just make sure you have a ladder tall enough to allow you to reach the peak without having to lean too far out. Shingles come in various styles, so follow the manufacturers instructions on the package. In general, you will want to allow enough overlap to keep rain from getting under them to the plywood (See photo 7). Once you have nailed all the shingles in place, check to make sure none of the nails are protruding through to the inside. Any nail points coming through should be carefully hammered over, or cut off using a portable grinder.

Shingling Instructions

Starting at one of the bottom corners, attach a shingle with two roofing nails. Then work your way across the bottom edge of the roof, butting each new shingle evenly against the last. You will need to cut the last one to make it even with the side edge of the roof. Just score it with a utility knife and snap it. The second row overlaps the first. The felt has lines running across to let you know how far to overlap each row. Just make sure you stagger the shingles so the seams don't line up and allow water to penetrate to your roof. (Like laying bricks). Do this for both sides up to the peak. For the peak itself, we cut our shingles in three pieces (at the slots). Fold them across the peak and nail at the corners. You can start at each end, overlapping toward the center, or just work from one end across to the other. Another option is a pre-fabricated peak cover.

We chose plain 1" x 3" boards for the trim around the windows and doors. With plain boards, you can simply cut the pieces to long enough to overlap on the top and bottom. For something a little more decorative, you might want to try your hand at one of the various molding styles available. If you decide to use molding, just make sure you have a miter

box, or a chop saw that can be set to 45° for the corners. You can also dress up the corners of the clubhouse in this same way.



The foreman on our job (Stuart, age 8-1/2) wanted a few extra touches to his clubhouse to give it a special look. We used the jigsaw to cut a simple scallop pattern into the 1" x 4" boards, and screwed them under the gable end of the roof on each side (See photo 8). The gates on each door were created by making a box from the leftover 1" x 3" trim pieces, then cutting and fitting the deck spindles. When measuring your gate size, make sure you allow enough roof for the door to swing open without rubbing the jam. Hang each gate using two 3" hinges, and attach one of the hooks to the other side. Two wooden ball finials attached to the roof peak finished things off.

All that is left is painting. This is where a foreman of any age can really get to work. The clubhouse will be outside in the weather for many years, so be sure to cover all exposed wood surfaces thoroughly with two coats of latex outdoor house paint. And try not to drip too much on each other!



Ace hardware is happy to provide these instructions. Use them as a guide to get started, and feel free to embellish them with any touches your carpentry skills permit. Just remember to be safe, have fun, and stop by the friendly hardware folks at Ace for all the tools, supplies and know-how you need to build the ultimate dream clubhouse!

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