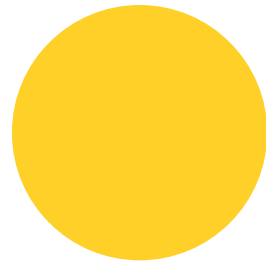
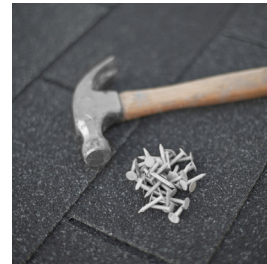
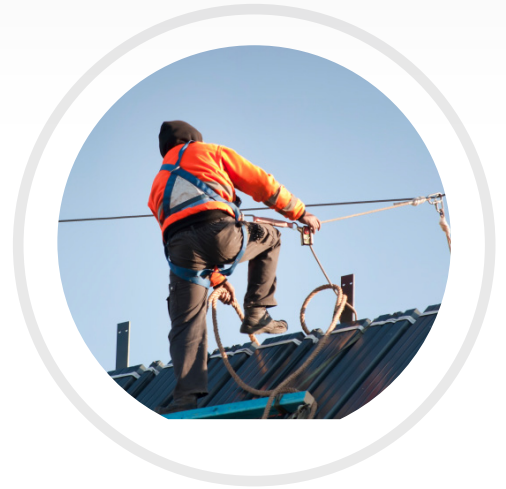


IMPROVEMENT CENTER



DIY Roofing Materials Guide

Are some roofing materials more suitable for DIY installations than others? This guide looks at which roofing products might be best for a DIYer and whether there's any you might want to avoid.



DIY Roofing Materials Guide

What makes a roofing material DIY-friendly? Perhaps the more important question to ask is whether installing any type of roofing can be considered a do-it-yourself home improvement project. Falling from even a one-story roof can cause severe injuries or death.

There's a good reason why professional roofing contractors have some of the highest insurance rates in the construction industry. Even for experienced tradespeople who work on roofs daily, one moment's inattention or carelessness can be catastrophic.

Safety Precautions for DIY Roofing Projects

If you do decide to proceed with your own roofing project, take time to read the safety recommendations posted on the government's Occupational Health and Safety Administration website related to working on a roof. Providing an accident-free environment for workers is OSHA's goal and the guidelines for working on a roof safely can be applied to your home improvement project as well. Consider these precautions:

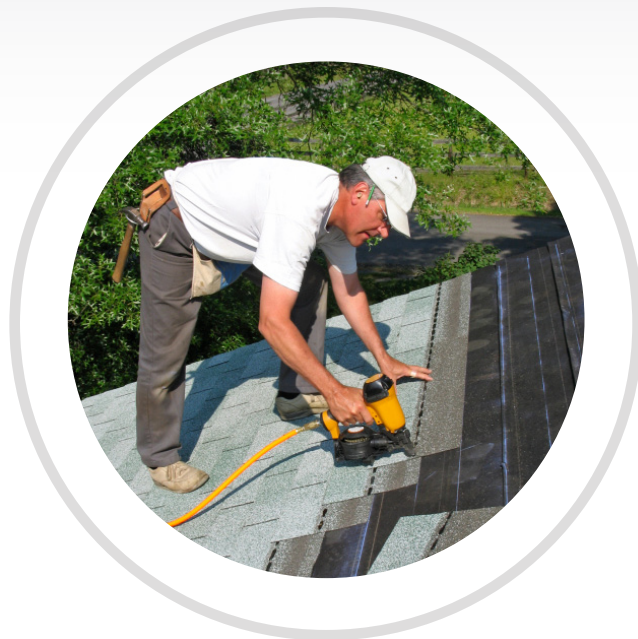
- **Ladder.** Your ladder should be in good condition with all rungs intact and be long enough to extend well past the roof eave where you'll be working. Check to make sure that the weight classification of the ladder meets your requirements.
- **Harness.** An approved safety harness should be worn any time you get on the roof. If you fall while it's being worn, the drop shouldn't be very far.
- **Weather.** Never work on a wet roof and that goes double when you suspect there may be snow or ice on its surface. Just about all types of roofing materials can be very slick when wet.

Roofing projects are not for home improvement beginners and even if you're a seasoned veteran, it's a good idea to steer clear of two-story roofs and those with steep pitches. This might mean having to swallow a bit of pride, but that can be much less painful than what might happen if you tackle a roof project that's beyond your abilities.

Roofing Materials Suitable for DIY Projects

If you choose to undertake your own roofing project rather than hire a contractor, certain materials are considered more DIY-friendly to install than others. Some roofing contractors even turn down jobs using specific materials that require special tools or skills, which may not be needed with more traditional products such as asphalt shingles. Not having extensive experience installing a roofing material can lead to warranty issues, and smart contractors try to keep away from those situations.

Remember that installing roofing isn't quite like most other DIY projects — if you hang an interior door incorrectly, the worst that can happen is that it may be difficult to open. However, if your roofing is installed improperly, you may have



OSHA — Fall Protection
• <http://www.osha.gov> • <http://www.osha.gov/doc/outreachtraining/htmlfiles/subpartm.html>

water pouring through your ceiling the next time it rains. Keeping that in mind, the following roofing materials might be considered appropriate for DIYers:

1. Asphalt shingles. Three-tab asphalt shingles are thought by many roofers to be the easiest material to install. Their design makes them simple to align while working your way up the slope and whether you use a hammer or a pneumatic nailing gun, they should be fairly easy to fasten. Even shingling your roof's ridge and valleys shouldn't pose too much of a problem.
2. Metal roofing. Most metal roofing manufacturers design their materials to lock together, which can make installation relatively straightforward. Panels or sheets are usually more DIY-friendly to install than metal shingles or shakes if for no other reason than each piece covers more roofing area. Panels or sheets are typically easier to keep in proper alignment as you work across the slope. Metal roofing companies normally make doing valleys and ridges a breeze by supplying specially designed trim for these areas.
3. Synthetic slate. This roofing material is installed in much the same fashion as three-tab asphalt shingles, but depending on the style, you may have staggered joints. Cutting and fastening synthetic slate should also be manageable, and most manufacturers include detailed installation instructions with their products.

Are there any products that weekend warriors should avoid? Proper installation of materials like authentic slate, wood shakes and clay tile calls for special skills and tools. All three of these might be beyond the abilities of even the most experienced DIYers.