MySqueakyFloors.com – User Guide
For: Counter Snap Kit (#3136)
"For Squeaky Hardwood Floors"

Please Read Before Using Product

3136 - Counter Snap Hardware Kit

Counter Snap is a floor squeak eliminator kit specially designed to eliminate annoying squeaks in hardwood or softwood floors and stairs (not recommended for parquet flooring). Each kit comes with the Counter-Snap fixture, a #2 recess square head driver, instructions, and 30 specially designed 3-inch screws.

The 1/8-inch diameter screws with 3/16-inch coarse threads provide the holding power of a screw with an easy-to-conceal hole the size of a finish nail. Specially scored, the screws are installed through a center hole in the Counter Snap Fixture using a power drill with a #2 recess square driver bit.

When the head of the screw hits the top of the fixture, the top 1-inch portion of the screw snaps off at the score, leaving 2 inches of the threaded portion of the screw countersunk 1/8 inch below the floor's surface.

For a hardwood floor application, I recommend that you first drill a pilot hole with a 7/64-inch or 1/8-inch drill bit to prevent the wood from splitting. A pilot hole is not necessary for decking boards as it will hinder wood expansion and its resulting concealment of the screw. When water is applied to deck boards, the expanding wood will almost totally conceal the hole.

While the Counter Snap tool and screws are designed for both hardwood and softwood floors, the drill bit you use to pre-drill will depend on the type of floor. The easiest way to tell if you have softwood is to see if your fingernail can make a mark in the wood. If it does, use a 3/32-inch drill bit or smaller.

The best way to determine bit size is to try it on an inconspicuous part of the flooring (perhaps inside a closet) and drive the screw down through the fixture. The screw should snap just as the head hits the fixture. If it does, you can use it on the rest of the floor. If it doesn't, then drop down a size on the drill bit to put more pressure on the screw.

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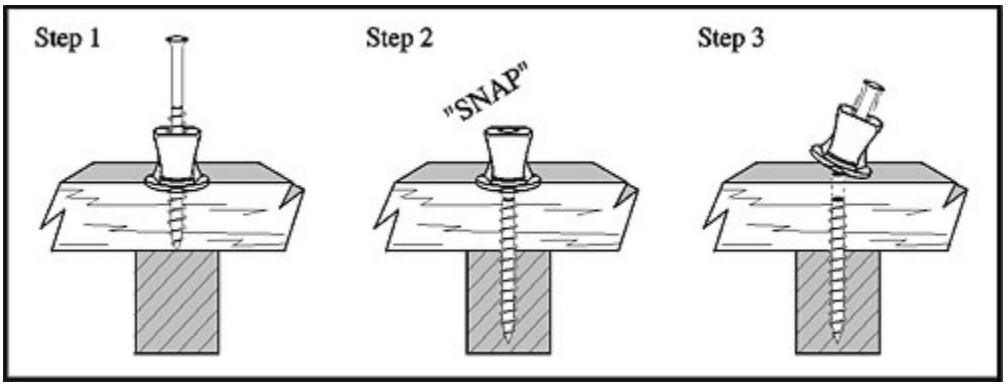
The Counter Snap screw fastening system is the solution if you have annoying squeaks in hardwood floors and stairs. However . . . think beyond squeaky floors and consider how the Counter Snap screw fastening system can make subtle repairs in furniture, wooden fences, or cabinets and be nearly invisible in trim work, wainscoting, baseboards, casing, and crown molding.

Basic Instructions:

Step 1: Drive Counter Snap screws through the fixture.

Step 2: You will hear a snap as the screw head hits the top of the fixture.

Step 3: Under stress, the screw snaps at the score and is countersunk 1/8 inch below the surface.



Troubleshoot Before Using The Counter Snap Hardware Kit

Before using this kit, I recommend that you print this page for reference. The flooring kit was designed to get the job done—we encourage you to read everything carefully before using the kit.

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It's important that you understand your floor construction and isolate the squeaks. The kit has a proven track record and works as designed. These tips go beyond the instructions included with the kit. The biggest mistake most individuals make is that they get in a hurry to use the kit. Those who used the kit successfully are those who took their time and did their homework.

Where do squeaks come from? An estimated 85 percent of all squeaks come from the top of the floor joist and the underside of the subfloor. In most cases there's no glue between the joist and the subfloor and nails were used rather than screws. If nails were used, they most likely were not ringshank nails. Over time, regular nails will pop upward, causing the bottom side of the subfloor to rub on the top surface of the floor joist and on the shank of the nail—and a squeak is born!

Squeaks can come from around floor ductwork. Squeaks can be created if one (or more) of the floor joists crowns downward rather than upward. Squeaks can be found in the field, i.e., the areas between joists. Squeaks could also come from between the subfloor and the underlayment or at the joints where they meet in double-floor construction. In single-floor construction, the squeaks could come from where the subfloor's joints meet or between hardwood and the subfloor. Normally in single-floor construction T&G sheet goods are used—squeaks could also come from the T&G joints.

Subfloors could be constructed using plywood sheets or 1x materials fastened on an angle to the tops of the floor joists. Normally 1x materials have spaces up to 1-inch between them, so if you are using the kit, it's possible that you could install a screw into one of these open areas. Because the fastener has nothing to grab on to, it will not work properly. This is one situation where it's really important to understand your floor's construction.

Where should you start? First spend time to isolate the squeaks. Once they are located and marked with painters' blue masking tape, locate your joists and the direction they run.

Next check to see if the squeaks you marked are in the same area as the floor joists (most likely they are). Now you are ready to use the kit. Begin by installing the screws directly over and into the floor joists. It is better to spread your screws apart, and the spread will be determined by the squeaks you located. If after doing this there are still squeaks, then begin again to isolate the squeaks. It's possible they are now within the field (between floor joists).

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Don't get carried away and install screws all over the place. Just because the kit contains 30 screws doesn't mean that you should use them all in a concentrated area. Isolate the squeaks and determine the width of the squeak area. Then use as few screws as possible to stop the squeaks.

Here's the bottom line:

- ✓ Isolate the squeaks;
- ✓ Know the size of the area containing the squeaks;
- ✓ Know whether or not you have a single- or double-floor construction; and
- ✓ Know the direction the floor joists run and where they are located in relation to the squeaks.

This product has a great 10 years+ track record and is successfully used by DIYers and professionals alike. Customers who have called to tell us they were unable to get the kit to work or that the kit didn't work hadn't carefully read the **Troubleshoot Before Using The Counter Snap Hardware Kit** (above) or the **Troubleshooting** (below), didn't understand their floor's construction and/or how squeaks travel, or didn't know how to properly use a cordless drill.

TROUBLESHOOT: WHEN A SCREW ONLY GOES IN PARTWAY OR DOESN'T BREAK OFF

In most cases when a screw goes only partway into the floor, it's due to incorrect tool use. If you are using a cordless drill/driver and cannot install the screw into the floor all the way, most likely the tool is not set up properly for use with this kit. Other possible causes could be that the cordless drill/driver doesn't have enough volts (power) or its battery is not fully charged. A 12-volt cordless drill/driver (or larger) is recommended for use with this kit.

A cordless drill is really a drill/driver, which means it was designed for use as a drill when set up in the drill mode. When used as a driver, it is designed to put in screws safely so as *not to break off the head of the screw* if the torque setting is correctly set. Unfortunately, the torque setting will not help with this kit when it comes to setting a screw to the full depth of the screw (3 inches) or for snapping the screw at the score mark.

To set the torque setting, locate the plastic multiple torque setting ring at the base of the drill/driver just before the base of the chuck. It has icons of screws or numbers and an icon of a drill bit. Set the drill/driver so the indicator points to the drill bit icon.

The driver mode has a clutch system designed to safely install screws without stripping or breaking off heads. The clutch prevents the tool from drilling, from installing 3-inch screws, and from snapping the screws as designed. Therefore, you want to set the cordless drill/driver to the drill mode to turn off the driver mode and inactivate the clutch. This setting will give you the full torque of the tool (i.e., no clutch) required to install this kit. HERE'S THE BOTTOM LINE: Put the cordless drill/driver in the drill mode when using this kit.

TROUBLESHOOT: WHEN A SCREW SPINS

The main reason why a screw spins and will not snap or back out is because the screw's threads are in a void (space) in the subfloor or are not in contact with a solid framing member such as a floor joist. To remove the screw when it spins, grab the fixture and pull up at the same time as you back out the screw.

Another reason why a screw spins is because the screw may have broken below the intentional score mark where the screw is suppose to break. It is the upper portion of the screw that will be spinning. Again, lift up on the fixture as you back out the screw.

TROUBLESHOOT: WHEN A SCREW BREAKS ABOVE THE FINISH FLOOR

If a screw breaks prematurely, it is possible that a pilot hole wasn't drilled in the hardwood or the screw tip hit another fastener (nail, screws, or staple) in the subfloor, a knot in the subfloor, or a framing member (joist). Unfortunately, this can happen and it's not the fault of the product. To get the screw out, place locking pliers on the remaining portion of the screw and turn the screw counter-clockwise to back out the screw.

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STAIR USE

Stairs have three components: stringers, treads, and risers. The stringer is the notched support to which the tread and riser are attached. When stairs are located between two walls, two stringers are used, each fastened to a wall on each side of the width of the steps. If a third stringer is used, it will be located down the center of the steps.

Normally, the nails that hold the tread and riser to the stringer and attach the riser to the backside of the tread will break or come loose over time, causing squeaking. In most cases it's the nails that attach the riser to the backside of the tread that will snap. If this is the case, the only way to fix the squeak is from the backside. If this side is covered, for example, with drywall or lath and plaster, it will have to be removed to provide access. Use screws to reattach the riser to the backside of the tread.

If nails have worked themselves up from the face of the tread or out from the face of the riser, then pull them completely out and use the Counter Snap kit to install screws back into the same holes. If the stairs are carpeted, place the alignment fixture from the Squeeeeek-No-More kit as close as possible to the sidewall and drive a screw through the tread into the stringer. If the screw spins within the alignment fixture, it means the screw didn't hit the stringer. The screw needs solid material in order for the screw top to snap off. If the screw didn't hit the stringer, use the Joist-Finding Screw to find the notched portion of the stringer.

Normally the tread has a 1-inch overhang over the riser and the riser is normally only 3/4-inch thick, providing a very narrow area in which to place screws, so it's important to measure the tread overhang, the thickness of the pad (if used), and the thickness of the carpet. I recommend using the Joist-Finding Screw to help target the center of the riser's top edge before placing the alignment fixture. Once you find the top edge of the riser, then drive the screw(s) through the tread's face and into the riser and snap off the top of the screw with the screw gripper, if it doesn't automatically snap off on its own.