

Board Foot Calculator — Quick Guide

What This Is

The Board Foot Calculator is a free web app that runs entirely in your browser, on your phone or computer — no install and no account required.

What It's For

Lumber is bought and sold by the **board foot** — a unit of volume (1" thick × 12" wide × 12" long) rather than by the piece. That makes it possible to compare prices fairly between a hardwood dealer and a home center, but the arithmetic is awkward to do by hand, especially once you're pricing out several different board sizes for a single project.

Why You'd Want to Use It

This app does that math for you, instantly, right on your phone, so you're not doing conversions in your head or on paper. If you're pricing out lumber for a project, you can find out the total cost before you buy. If you're buying rough-sawn hardwood — which is commonly sold and priced by board foot rather than by the linear foot — you can measure a board, get its board footage on the spot, and move on to the next one. And if you're pricing out several different boards for the same job, you can keep a running list of everything you've measured, with a combined board-foot and cost total, instead of tallying it up separately afterward. It's also a handy way to double-check what a lumberyard or supplier is charging you.

What It Does

- **Calculates total board feet** from a board's thickness, width, length, and quantity.
- **Understands lumber thickness shorthand.** Rough lumber is usually described in quarters of an inch — "4/4" (four-quarter) means 1" thick, "8/4" means 2" thick, and so on. Tap one of these instead of doing the conversion yourself.
- **Switches between inches and feet** for the length measurement, whichever is easier for you to measure and enter.
- **Estimates cost**, if you enter a price per board foot.
- **Builds a running purchase list**, so you can add several different board sizes and see the combined total board feet and total cost for everything at once.
- **Lets you name each entry**, with an optional label — handy for noting the species or anything else that helps you tell entries apart at a glance.
- **Remembers your last entries**, so if you close the app and come back later, your numbers are still there.

- **Copies your current calculation** to your clipboard with one tap.
- **Shares, copies, prints, or exports your whole purchase list** once you've built one up.

How to Use It

1. Set the thickness. Tap one of the buttons across the top (4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 8/4, 10/4, or 12/4) for standard rough lumber sizes. If your board is a nonstandard or surfaced (planed) thickness, just type the exact number into the Thickness box instead.
2. Enter the width, in inches — for example, 5.5 for a board that measures 5½" wide.
3. Enter the length. Use the IN / FT switch next to "Length" to choose whether you're entering inches or feet, then type the number.
4. Enter the quantity — how many boards of that exact size you have or need. It defaults to 1.
5. Read your total. The total board feet appears automatically near the top of the page as soon as you've entered a thickness, width, and length — no need to press a button.
6. **(Optional)** Add pricing. Tap "Pricing & Purchase List" to expand that section, then enter a price per board foot to see the estimated cost for the current board.
7. **(Optional)** Label the entry. Type something into the Label box — a wood species, a project name, whatever helps you recognize it later — before adding it to your list.
8. **(Optional)** Add to your purchase list. Tap "Add current board to list" to save the current entry and start on the next size. The list keeps a running total of board feet and cost for everything you've added.
9. Copy your current calculation. Tap the copy icon near the top of the page to copy a text summary of just the board you're working on right now — handy for a quick one-off message.
10. Get your whole purchase list out of the app, once you've added a few entries:
 - **Share list** — opens your phone's share sheet (Messages, Mail, Notes, AirDrop, etc.) with a text summary, and the full list as a CSV file attached where your browser supports it. This is the fastest option on a phone.
 - **Copy** — copies a plain-text summary of the whole list to your clipboard.
 - **CSV** — downloads the list as a spreadsheet file, with each board's details in its own cell.
 - **Print** — sends the whole page, including your full purchase list, to your browser's print dialog.
11. Clear your list. "Clear list" removes every entry from your purchase list. It doesn't reset the Thickness, Width, Length, Quantity, Price, or Label boxes — those need to be cleared by hand if you want to start a calculation completely fresh.

A Note on Lumber Sizes

Rough lumber is sold by its **nominal** size (the “4/4” or “8/4” label), but after it's dried and planed smooth, the **actual** thickness is slightly less — commonly about $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " thinner than the nominal size. This calculator works from the actual, measured dimensions of your board, not the nominal label, so your totals will be accurate regardless of how the wood was milled. When in doubt, measure the board itself rather than relying on the label.