

Your Complete Guide to Buying a Gas Fireplace

From fuel types to measurements, we're answering all your burning questions.



Perfect for upgrading a preexisting hearth space without the stress of a major renovation, a gas fireplace is low-maintenance, energy efficient, and easy to control, making it an ideal alternative for heating your home. When searching for the right gas fireplace, start by considering the gas and vent types that best fit your space and heating needs. Then, follow our step-by-step measuring guide to make sure it fits, and read up on all installation requirements.

Insert vs. Logs

Gas Insert: Designed to slide into masonry fireplaces, these closed-combustion fireboxes are usually made of steel or cast iron, and fronted with insulated glass. Most models include logs and a built-in fan to help circulate an even distribution of heat throughout the room.

Zero Clearance Fireplace: Featuring a firebox comprised of materials that prevent the outside of the fireplace from becoming hot enough to burn other materials, this type of gas insert does not require a hearth space to function properly. It can be placed almost directly against combustible materials like woods, walls, or paneling, and will always require a venting system.

Log Sets: Installed directly inside of a fireplace, gas logs mimic the look of real wood, but are usually made of ceramic, which allows them to withstand high temperatures. Log sets require minimal installation since they do not come with a firebox, and feature a flame that is accessible. All sets also include a burner and a grate.

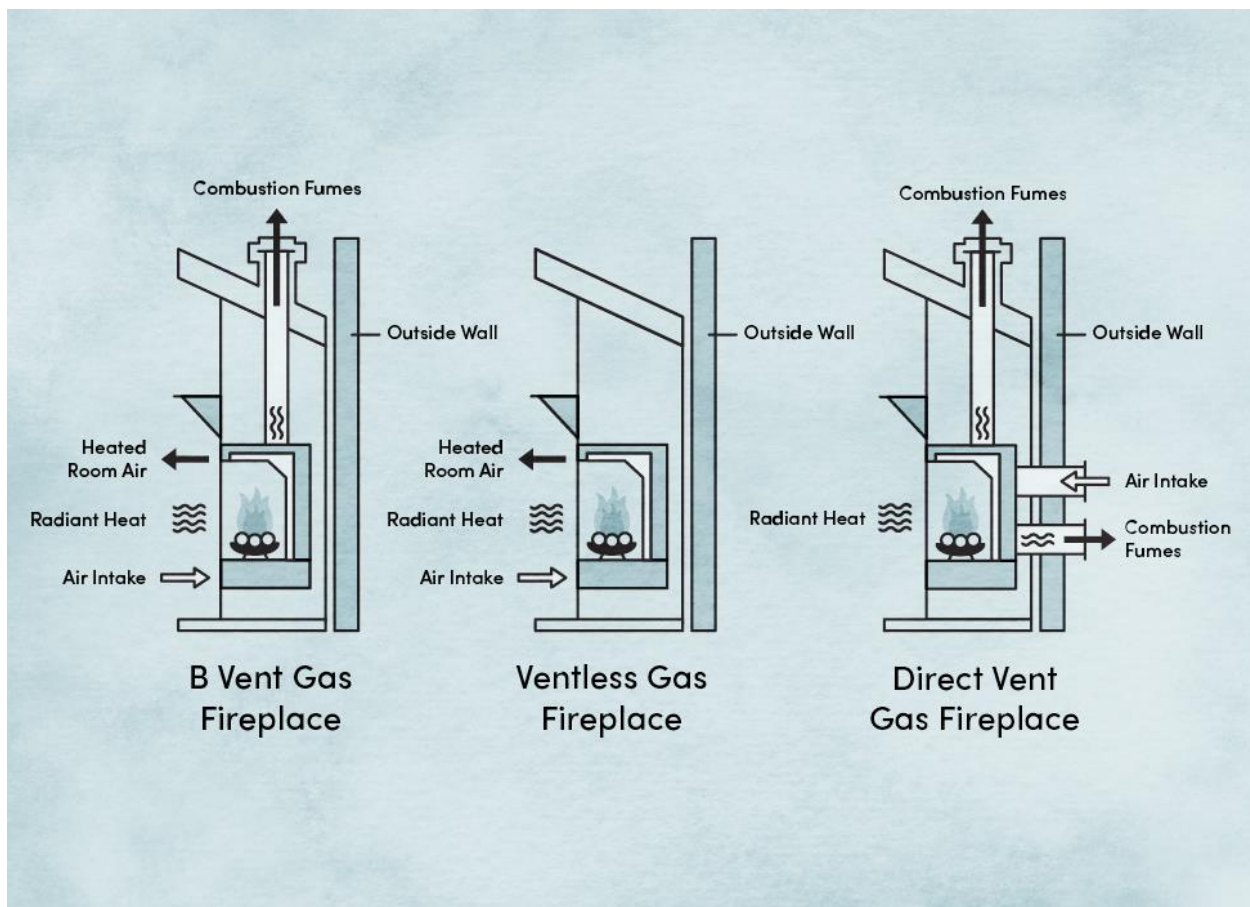
Fuel Types to Know

Natural Gas: The most common fuel type used by consumers for a gas fireplace, this is the best option when a natural gas line already runs through your house. Since it is lighter than air, natural gas will dissipate more quickly and create less black residue.

Liquid Propane: Widely available and convenient in areas where a gas line is not accessible, this fuel type requires the existence or installation of an external liquid propane tank. Due to its high amount of carbon, liquid propane burns nearly three times hotter than natural gas.

Vent Types to Know

There are three main structural types of gas fireplaces: Direct Vent, B Vent, and Ventless. While they all serve the same primary function of heating a space, they differ in structure and how they operate. Here's a more detailed breakdown of each.



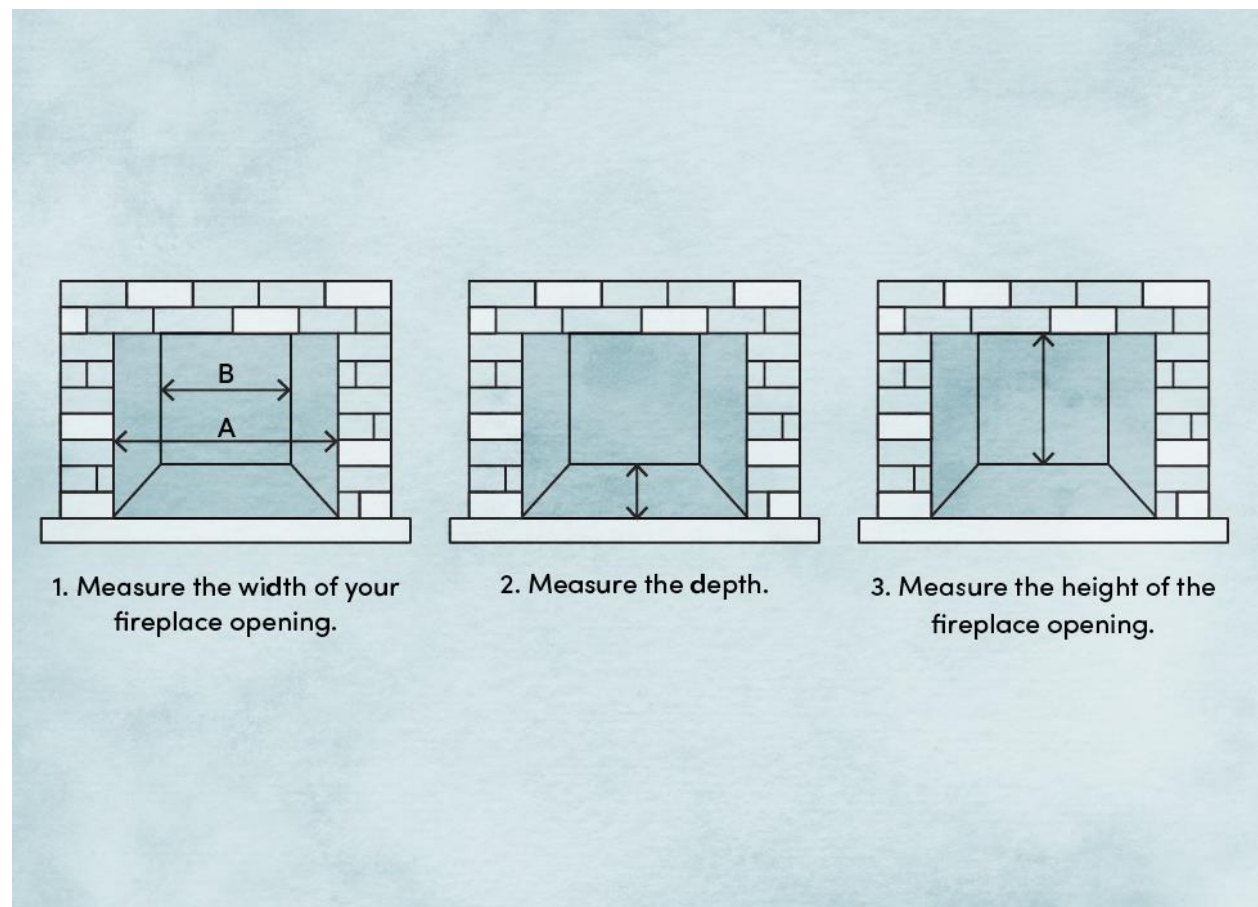
Direct Vent: Using a two-layered piping system, **fresh air is pulled from outside of the home** for combustion and vents the waste to the outside as well. The most common type of venting system, direct vent fireplaces can terminate vertically or horizontally through the roof, chimney, or a wall. This is a closed system with the flame behind glass.

B Vent: Using a single-walled pipe that **pulls air from the room** into the fireplace for combustion, B vent gas fireplaces must always terminate vertically out of the home, either through the chimney or through the roof via a pipe. This is not a closed system.

Ventless: Requiring no flue, ventless gas fireplaces burn at a higher temperature to exhaust harmful fumes. Ventless fireplaces also boast oxygen-depletion sensors that automatically shut off the gas should oxygen levels dip too low. Without a ventilation system, all of the heat stays inside of the home, making it the most effective option of the three vent types. It's important to note that ventless gas fireplaces are not legal everywhere, so be sure to check your state and local codes for any restrictions.

Measuring Your Hearth Space

To determine the right size insert for an existing hearth, grab a tape measure and follow these three easy steps for finding the width, height, and depth of the fireplace opening. Then, choose a log set or insert that best fits your space.



Step 1: Measure the Width of the Fireplace Opening

To find the width, measure from wall to wall (side to side) in both the front (A) and back (B) of the fireplace opening. Check the width of the firebox (the part of the insert where the fire actually burns), which will sit approximately ten inches inside your fireplace opening. Then choose an insert that's closest in size to the width of your fireplace opening.

Step 2: Measure the Height of the Fireplace Opening

To find the right height, measure up from the base of the fireplace opening at each corner, taking stock of the lowest measurement in case of any difference. Then, choose an insert that's closest in size to the height of your fireplace opening, making sure that any trim will fit over the edge of the opening if needed.

Step 3: Measure the Depth

To find the usable depth, measure from the front of the opening to the back wall. Choose an insert with a slightly smaller depth to fit inside your existing fireplace opening.

Installing Your Gas Fireplace

An existing hearth space and gas line are required for the installation of any gas fireplace. For the easiest and most seamless install, we recommend consulting a plumber and certified hearth specialist in your area. Post-installation, an annual inspection should become a part of your maintenance routine.

Questions?

Call our Certified Experts:

1-877-WAYFAIR