One-Saturday Mantel Build Checklist

Frame a custom electric fireplace nook between flat-pack bookcases.

Transform your living room in a single weekend with a seamless built-in electric insert. Grab your measurements and materials to confidently tackle this custom upgrade.



Key Specs & Dimensions

~5,100
BTU zone heat output capacity

~1¢
hourly cost for flame-only setting

3 ft
minimum clearance from front vent

30 in
standard flat-pack bookcase width

1.5-2 in
minimum oak mantel wood thickness

1/4 in
typical rough opening expansion gap

Buy the Insert First

Always purchase your built-in-rated insert before buying framing lumber. Having the physical unit ensures exact mounting measurements and prevents costly mistakes that are difficult to fix later.

The Build Sequence

1. **Anchor the Bookcases** Secure to wall studs with 3-inch construction screws through the upper cabinet rail.
2. **Frame Center Box** Build a lumber skeleton with vertical studs every 16 inches to support the heavy facing.
3. **Face and Trim** Cover with smooth MDF, apply paintable caulk to the edges, and paint for a seamless finish.
4. **Mount the Mantel** Secure the solid oak plank with construction adhesive and finish nails to the top plate.
5. **Set the Flame** Select a slow, amber-only speed for a realistic wood-fire look that reads beautifully.

Your Custom Cut List

Find your row: **Your Build Component**

Your Build Component	Your pick	Why
2x4 base and top plates	Gap between the bookcases	Ensures a snug friction fit
Mantel plank width	Box width plus 2 inches	Allows a side overhang
Mantel plank depth	Box depth plus one inch	Creates traditional front overhang
Power cord pass-through	Small lower stud hole	Fits plug to wall outlet

Pre-Build Site Checks

- ◯ Verify your dedicated circuit requirements in the manufacturer manual.
- ◯ Check the physical manual for the exact rough opening dimensions.
- ◯ Measure the distance between inner bookcase walls at floor and ceiling.
- ◯ Confirm a minimum 8-inch vertical clearance above the heater vent.
- ◯ Ensure your insert is explicitly certified for zero-clearance installations.

Project Notes

Enjoy the cozy warmth and ambiance of your beautiful new custom fireplace!