

## Doorway(s) too narrow for a wheelchair?

The ADA accessibility standards state that a doorway must have a clear width of at least 32 inches to provide adequate wheelchair clearance. In spite of that, some homes in Four Seasons have narrower interior doorways, and it can be difficult to maneuver wheelchairs, transport chairs and sometimes even walkers into certain rooms. Dick Yost, whose home is a Martinique model, found a clever way to add about two inches to the doorway of the master bath by changing the door hinges to a type that offsets the door. This can be a fairly simple and inexpensive solution.



### How to tell if these will help

The doorway you hope to widen must open through a full 90 degrees of sweep for the hinges to help. Swing the door as far open as it will go to be sure nothing stops the door itself from opening at least that much. If there is any interference, these hinges may not work.

### Where to find the hinges

**Amazon** has them in a "satin brass" finish ([click here for image](#)), the ones Dick used. They come one per package (three/door are needed), \$5.48 each, free shipping if included with an order of \$25.00 or more. Find a friend or neighbor who also needs three and get free shipping.

**Lowes** has the same hinge ([click here for image](#)), but with only a "brushed steel" finish, one per package. They are not stocked at either the Charlottesville or Ruckersville store. They can be easily ordered on line through the link below, and the price is \$6.98/hinge, plus shipping and tax. They are not available for store pickup. The total with tax and shipping, \$28.04 for three.

Pros: 1. These are sold singly (most suppliers package two together, leaving you with one you don't need). 2. No drilling needed, the new hinge fits the existing screw holes. 3. These hinges, unlike similar ones, are angled slightly to clear the wood trim around the door. This slightly increases the opening width, and just looks nicer.

Cons: 1. Finish doesn't come in polished brass. It's brushed (matte) steel (Lowes) or satin brass (Amazon). 2. The hinge corners are right angles and don't exactly fit the existing radiused recesses in the door. As you can see from the photo, they can be installed regardless and look just fine. Or the installer could fit them with a couple of chisel cuts and the difference wouldn't show at all.

**Amazon.com** also has several variations of these. Use these links to see some examples.

[https://www.amazon.com/HealthSmart-Expandable-Door-Hinges-Brass/dp/B0009STNNS/ref=sr\\_1\\_12\\_a\\_it?ie=UTF8&qid=1482271395&sr=8-12&keywords=door+hinges+3.5](https://www.amazon.com/HealthSmart-Expandable-Door-Hinges-Brass/dp/B0009STNNS/ref=sr_1_12_a_it?ie=UTF8&qid=1482271395&sr=8-12&keywords=door+hinges+3.5)

Notes: The above are sold in pairs only – buy three sets and do two doors, or share with a neighbor. About \$21/pair plus tax and shipping. Read the very helpful Amazon buyer reviews on this model.

[https://www.amazon.com/Stone-Harbor-Hardware-Offset-Vintage/dp/B01JK85XTK/ref=sr\\_1\\_19?ie=UTF8&qid=1482271395&sr=8-19-spons&keywords=door+hinges+3.5&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/Stone-Harbor-Hardware-Offset-Vintage/dp/B01JK85XTK/ref=sr_1_19?ie=UTF8&qid=1482271395&sr=8-19-spons&keywords=door+hinges+3.5&psc=1)

Notes: Again sold in pairs only. Two other finishes but no polished brass available. These are reviewed as being strongly made, which is a good thing. About \$16.50/pair and free shipping. Photos imply that the corners would match our existing hinges. The pins are not removable, which makes installation a bit more cumbersome. Read all the reviews.

### **Installation**

1. Reviews state that installation is easier if the hinge pin on the new hinge is removable, so that you can do first one half of each hinge on the door jamb, and then the other half sections on the door. When everything is screwed down, you can then just move the door up to all three hinges at the same time and tap the big pins in place.
2. Check for how you will be able to fit a door stop. It doesn't look like the ones we have now, that fit on the hinge pin, will work on the offset hinges.
3. Be sure that even if your door can swing a full 90 degrees, that it will not contact anything like a towel rail or another door if you add two inches to the radius of the swing.
4. Don't put too much weight behind "heavy-duty" descriptions. The hollow-core interior doors in our homes are quite light, and require three hinges in any case. Even the more lightly built hinges should give good service.

Researched and edited by Chuck Probst  
[ceprobst@comcast.net](mailto:ceprobst@comcast.net) (540)967-0416