



## Choosing millimetres, centimetres or metres

When you're measuring the length, width or height of something, it's important that you choose the right unit. So should you choose millimetres, centimetres or metres?

As a very general rule, you should measure small objects in millimetres or centimetres and bigger lengths in metres.

### Millimetres (mm)

A millimetre is about the width of a sewing needle.

You would probably measure small items such as screws or lines on a plan using mm.

There are 10 mm in a centimetre (cm). So if an object measures 12 mm then you could also write this measurement as 1 cm 2 mm.



### Centimetres (cm)

A centimetre is roughly the width of a finger.

You would measure the length of a newborn baby or your neck size using cm.

A cm is the same as 10 mm. So if an object like a matchbox measures 8 cm in length then you can also write this as 80 mm.



### Metres (m)

A metre is about the length of a person's stride.

You would measure longer things like a room or a garden using metres.

A metre is the same as 1,000 mm, although if things are big enough to be measured in metres then the measurement isn't usually shown in millimetres. An exception to this might be scale drawings where a high level of detail is needed.

If the deep end of a swimming pool is marked as 1.6 m this could also be written as 1 m 60 cm

