

To Patio, or Not To Patio?

Whether you're dreaming of a brand new outdoor living space or are dying to revamp an unsightly slab of concrete, planning ahead is the key to creating a patio that's both beautiful and functional.

Consider the purpose of your patio. Are you going to throw a lot of parties outside, use it as a family space, or would you rather a small, quiet, private patio just big enough for a couple of chairs and a small table? Decide whether your patio will be a gathering place or a getaway space.

Location, location, location. Most patios should be accessible to the kitchen, since that's where people generally come outside, and down as few steps as possible. However, a getaway patio (perhaps a new space in addition to an entertaining patio) can be more remote, toward the back of the property. Walk around the property and check out vantage points to determine location and orientation. Depending on what kind of landscaping the house already has, how close neighboring homes are, and whether there's a view, you can usually come up with a couple of areas that will work. Finding the best spot is key.

Like location, size matters. It's common to underestimate how big the patio should be. How many people will normally congregate in the space? If I'm building a patio with a central fire pit and 4 or 6 chairs, it might be a circle of 14 feet in diameter or larger. There's no specific rule of thumb as to size, but if the site allows, design proportionately to the house, making the patio as wide as the house and as long as the house's height, or matching it to the size of an indoor room.

Plan the landscaping. Before putting down roots, be honest about whether you're a plant lover or a low-maintenance person. You can always do the hardscape first and add plant material later, when it's easier to visualize the space. The surrounding area of the patio makes the space.

Finally, think about the extras. A fireplace or fire pit provides evening appeal; a water feature adds ambiance and helps block noise from a busy street. Landscape lighting around the patio is lovely after the sun goes down, and a well-placed trellis can shade the hot afternoon sun and give privacy from a neighbor's second story. As you plan, make it fun. Play around a little, and don't get hung up on details too early. The patio is a part of your home, so have fun with the design and make it yours.

Not sure what kind of patio your property can handle? Looking for expert advice, designs, or hardscape crews? Here at D&D, we've got you covered. We have the equipment, knowledge, and skill to give you exactly what you want. Give us a call today!

Paul Doherty

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