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DIY Patio Construction Tips

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patio>

New construction of patios require the decision of Regular Concrete, Stamped Concrete, or Aggregate Concrete. Stamped concrete is known for its aesthetics. Stamped concrete costs more, is known to be slippery, requires being resealed, and dyes typically fade in time. Aggregate Concrete uses stones exposed giving its own style. Aggregate is known to be painful to walk on. Other common patio features include additional of reinforcement for hot tubs and additional steps from the home.

(Wikipedia)

Many homeowners envision a beautiful patio, that magical place to unwind, share with family, entertain with your friends, cook out, and simply enjoy. It also can add a consideral ROI to your investment if you plan on selling inthe furture.

Creating the perfect outdoor space for you and your family starts with proper planning on the size, construction material, furniture and lighting.

These selections have a undeniable effect on the look, functionality, and of this important home project.

Getting Started

Your patio should work with, not against your home and the existing landscape.

If you're working with a large space, consider different levels and construction materials. The most beautiful designs incorporate at least a few different materials. You may want to install pavers and wood or concrete decking.

When you come up with a final design of your dreams, think about the actual construction materials you want to use, which ones will look great in a patio, during the daylight, and what would look great at night.

You may find that you might end up juggling the materials and design elements against the projects budget and subsequent on-going maintenance. Let's first consider materials.

Concrete Flat Work

Concrete is the go-to material of choice for most homeowners looking at cost vs function. Concrete flat work basically is - the least expensive and easiest to install. It can be colored, stamped, shaped, cut or set to look like other materials, so the finished product can be really impressive for a minimal investment.

Concrete tip: Generally a standard concrete slab is four inches thick, (check local building codes for your proper and or legal requirements for pouring concrete), but if you intend to construct something very heavy, like a built-in pizza fireplace, have your installer/contractor reinforce that area where you plan on having a large built up area; before you pour concrete.

Brick Work

One of the unique inherent aspects of bricks is that they are available in a vast variety of colors. Bricks create a beautifully subtle and warm patio. Using brick in your construction typically costs more than poured concrete, not just the materials, but also for the labor to install them. This might be a considerable decision when planning your patio, when you are paying for each and every brick that must be set by hand, leveled and then grouted.

However this give you more options as far as your design of the space with patterns, running bone, herringbone or a boxed, or basket weave design. Ask your brickwork installer/mason for some design ideas.

Brick work tip: For patio installations, solid 1" or 2" thick paving bricks are by far, the best choice. Either dry-laid (over sand/gravel) or mortared in place. Be careful about installing brick work in a deeply shaded area, as you will have to be careful about build up of moss/slime that creates a slippery surface after rain.

Standard Pavers

Pavers, generally are manufactured from a few inexpensive and simple elements: cement, cinder or stone.

If you want to consider an easy and cost effective DIY project, then pavers fit that bill, well.

They are priced reasonably low and provide the easiest and most simple installation for an easy DIY'er project.

When planning to install your own patio, you have to consider:

1. a suitable substrate consisting of at least three inches of sand or substrate gravel.
2. a permanent concrete border curb, to keep the pavers from moving or shifting.

Planning tip: If the new patio lies over sprinkler or utility lines, it will be easier to remove and replace if you need to access the services below the pavers.

Stone Work

The highly desirable look of stone comes with a much higher price point. If the stone isn't locally sourced, then it costs more. The payoff is its beautiful natural appeal.

On the less expensive side of stone, irregular shaped stone can give a nice natural look.

Moving up to precisely cut slate, blue stone, travertine, or granite provides the uniform look of a formal luxury patio, again, at a premium cost.

Stone Work tip: While natural stone is extremely enduring for any patio, better to get a non-slip stone, like coral stone, travertine, flagstone, or blue stone.

Tile Work

Many different type are available in ceramic: glass, porcelain, terra cotta and natural stone, tiles. All of these can give you a beautiful mosaic patio design that are cool to your feet in hot weather. Because tile is thin by nature, it requires installation on a concrete slab. This option give you one of the largest set of choices as far as design and color goes.

Planning tip: For a patio, which generally is considered a high traffic area, it is better not to install the tile yourself. You should hire a professional to pour an even slab and install the tile on it. Another thing to consider: not all tile is good for patio installation. To withstand the hazards and extremes of weather, all materials used in this installation: tile, thinset, grout and sealer; should be specifically designed/formulated for exterior use.

In Conclusion

Before you jump in and get over your head, it is best to plan the project as far as construction materials, costs, and other important items, some listed above, before you get started. Measure twice, and cut once.