

Patio Project

Playbook



Planning Process

Everyone's process is a little different, but many hardscape projects follow some version of these four steps.

1 Choose Your Contractor

Research contractors by checking reviews, and asking for recommendations from friends or neighbors. Verify their licenses, insurance, and experience with patio installations. Obtain multiple quotes to compare pricing and services offered, but don't automatically choose the lowest bid. Ensure the contractor understands your vision and can provide a detailed plan and timeline.

3 Select Your Style

Finding inspiration for a patio can be a delightful journey, blending personal style with functional design. Start by exploring various sources such as home and garden magazines, Pinterest boards, and local outdoor spaces. Consider how styles will interact with your home's architecture. Finally, think about the ambiance you wish to create -- whether it's a tranquil retreat with lush greenery, a modern minimalist space with contemporary furniture, or a rustic setting with stone and wood elements.

2 Refine Your Vision

Identify the primary purpose of your patio, whether it's for entertaining guests, relaxing with family, or dining al fresco. Consider the layout and how it will integrate with your existing landscape, including the flow between indoor and outdoor areas. Think about incorporating elements like lighting, furniture, and plants to enhance the space's comfort and appeal, ensuring it becomes a true extension of your home.

4 Build Your Budget

Building a realistic budget is essential to a completing successful patio project without overspending. Work with your contractor to determine the size and layout of the patio, which will influence material costs and labor. Next, choose materials and research pricing. Factor in additional expenses like landscaping, lighting, and utilities, and any subcontractors who may be needed for their installation. It's also wise to set aside a contingency fund for unexpected costs. You'll find budget help later in this guide.

Choose Your Contractor

Three important questions to consider when seeking the right professional to create your new outdoor living space.

Are they fully licensed and insured? Request contractors' license numbers and certificates of insurance, then check with your state's licensing board and the insurance company, respectively, to verify their standing and confirm policy limits.

Does their style match your preference? Contractors can specialize in particular design styles. Review contractors' websites and online portfolios to ensure they've created projects in alignment with your vision.

Does their timeline work for you? Don't be afraid to ask for a firm timeline for your project! When can they begin? When will they finish? These are questions reputable contractors should be prepared to answer. Remember that good contractors are usually busy and you may have to be patient to work with your top choice.

Contractor Name / Phone Number	Are they fully licensed and insured?	Does their style match your preference?	Does their timeline work for you?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Refine Your Vision

Being able to answer these questions will help your contractor recommend concepts and products.

General

- Which specific hardscape features interest you (e.g., patio, walkway, retaining/garden/seat walls, fire pit, outdoor kitchen)?
- What's the primary purpose of adding hardscapes (e.g., aesthetic appeal, functionality, property value)?
- Do you have a particular design style in mind for your hardscape (e.g., rustic, timeless, contemporary)?

Planning and Design

- Have you selected the location where you wish to add the hardscape?
- What's the approximate size of the area where you plan to add the hardscape? What's the approximate size of the hardscape?
- Do any existing landscape features or structures need to be considered or integrated into the new design?
- Have you given thought to the traffic flow and accessibility of the hardscape within your overall design?
- Will you require site drawings prepared by a landscape designer or landscape architect to make design decisions?

Material and Budget

- What materials are you considering for your hardscape (e.g., brick, natural stone, concrete, wood, asphalt)?
- Are there specific brands or types of materials you prefer or want to avoid?
- Do you have a budget in mind for this project?

Continued...

Practical Considerations

- How much regular maintenance (e.g., sweeping, cleaning, sealing, grout repair) are you willing to perform to ensure the upkeep of your hardscape?
- Do you have any drainage issues or soil conditions that should be considered or addressed before installation?
- Have you checked local building codes or homeowner association guidelines that might affect your hardscape project?

Professional Help and DIY

- Are you planning to hire a professional contractor or will you take a DIY approach?
- If hiring a professional, have you researched or contacted potential contractors?
- Do you need help with the design phase, or do you have a clear vision of what you want?

Long-Term Use and Impact

- How do you envision using the hardscape area in the long term (e.g., entertaining, relaxation, cooking, gardening)?
- Are you considering any additional features such as lighting, seating, or water elements?
- How will the new hardscape affect your existing landscape and plantings?

Select Your Style

List products and concepts you'd like to consider for your outdoor living space.

Walls

Steps

Landscaping


Surfaces / Walkways

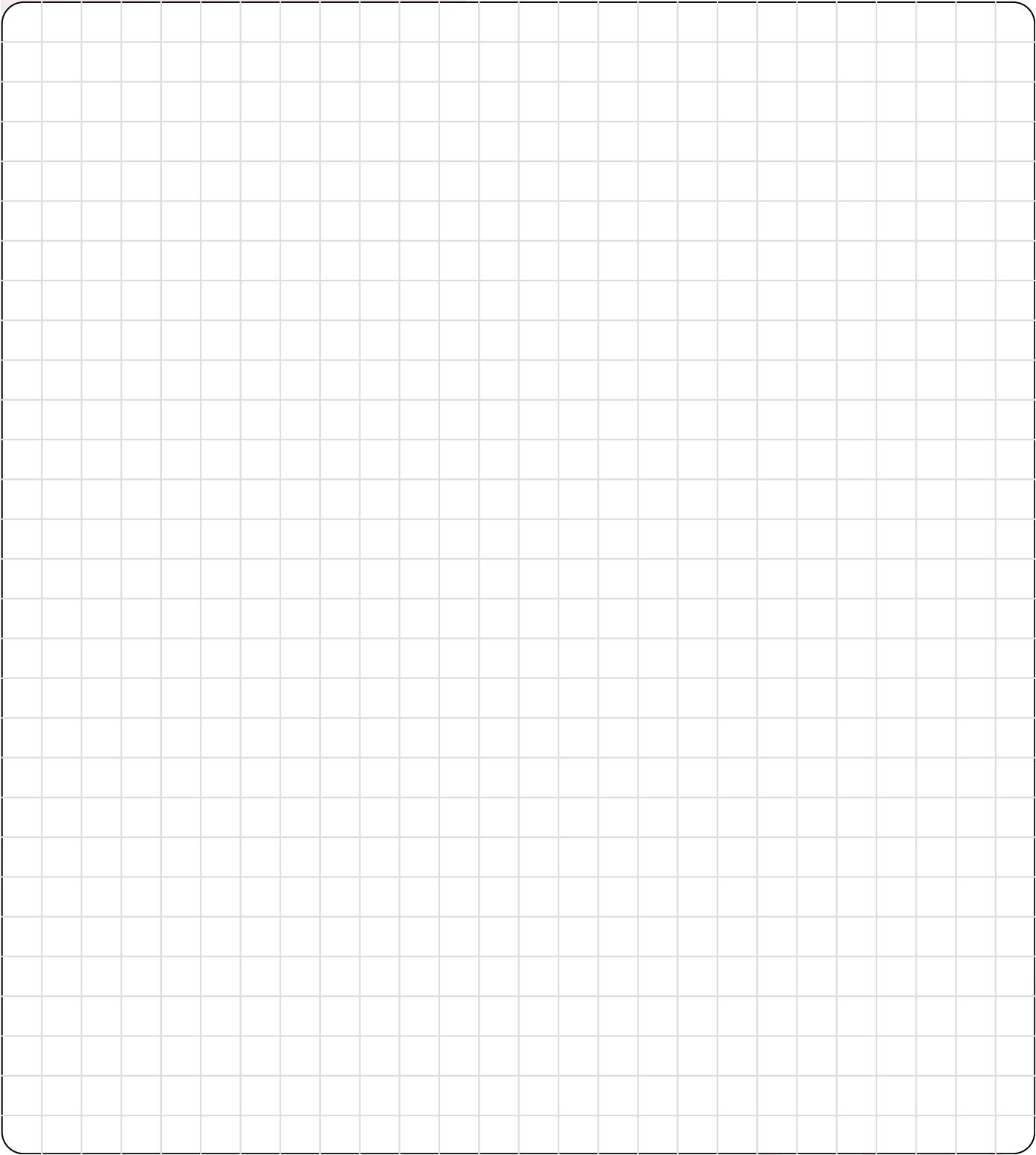
Furniture / Decor

Other Features

Draw It Out

A picture's worth a thousand words. Use this space to sketch your vision to scale.

 = 1 sq ft



Building Your Budget

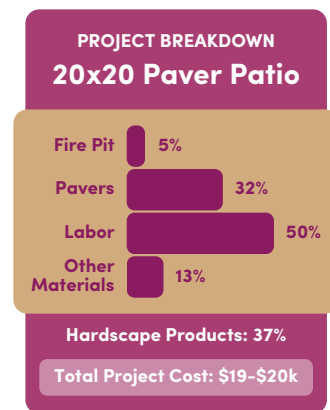
A sound budget should reflect your spending capabilities, prioritize essential elements, and include contingency monies.

Planning a patio project involves more than choosing materials and design; it requires thoughtful budgeting to bring your vision to life. These tips will help you navigate the financial aspects of your patio project, from setting a realistic budget to managing costs effectively.

Assess Your Finances. Determine a realistic budget for your patio project without straining your finances. Research financing options, such as home equity loans or lines of credit. These options are often attractive as they use borrowed money to increase your home's value, helping you design your patio without upfront financial strain.

Define Your Scope. Determine the size and layout of your patio by envisioning its use and considering building codes. Identify features like seating, dining areas, outdoor kitchens, fire pits, lighting, and landscaping.

Research Costs and Breakdown Expenses. Create a list of supplies for your planned space, including materials, furniture, lighting, and landscaping items, and research their costs. Get quotes from contractors for installation. Expect labor costs to account for roughly 50% of your budget, with products and additional materials comprising the other half.



Prioritize Your Needs. Prioritize essential patio elements within your budget, focusing on high-priority items. Discuss with your contractor about completing certain areas in phases, ensuring the layout allows for future additions like a grill island, fire pit, or water feature.

Finalize Your Budget. Estimate your total expenses for your project to establish an overall budget. Adjust to align with your resources and goals. Avoid sacrificing material quality for space, as prioritizing quantity over quality can be more costly in the long run. Reserve 10-20% of your budget for unexpected expenses and contingencies that may arise during the project.

Review and Revise. Review your budget regularly during the planning and execution stages. Be ready to revise it due to pricing changes, design plans, or unforeseen circumstances. Your contingency budget will help cushion any added costs.

Budget Worksheet

Start with your total budget and contingency, then input expenses to determine if adjustments are needed.

Products

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Labor

Contractor Quote:
Contractor Quote:
Contractor Quote:
Contractor Quote:
Contractor Quote:

Landscaping & Accessories

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Projected Cost

Products	+	<input type="text"/>
Labor	+	<input type="text"/>
Accessories	+	<input type="text"/>
Total Cost	=	<input type="text"/>

My Budget

Budget	+	<input type="text"/>
Contingency	+	<input type="text"/>
Total Cost	-	<input type="text"/>
Difference	=	<input type="text"/>