

## LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A PATIO OR WALKWAY

**Skill Level: INTERMEDIATE** Give these projects a try if you're a confident DIYer with a good working knowledge of a variety of tools. They can take a day or more to complete. If you can build a birdhouse or install a ceiling fan, your skill level is probably appropriate.

### ✓ MATERIALS

- Wheelbarrow
- Work Gloves
- Flat-Bladed Shovel
- Garden Spade
- Level
- Nylon Mason's String
- Wood Stakes
- Line Level
- Hammer
- Rented Plate Compactor or Hand Tamper
- Garden Rake
- Landscape Fabric
- Long Pieces of 1" PVC Pipe
- Long, Straight 2x4 or 2x6

The integrity of a paver patio or walkway starts with a strong foundation. If you don't properly lay your foundation, your patio or walkway is prone to problems in the future. Using the right materials and techniques to lay your base will ensure that your project will last for years. In Part One of this three-part series, *Designing a Patio or Walkway*, we marked the area for our patio. Watch the video to see how to plan your patio. Then you're ready to lay the foundation. Finish the project by watching *How to Install a Paver Patio* at [Lowe's.com/Videos](http://Lowe's.com/Videos).

### PREPARING THE AREA

#### 01 Excavate the marked area a few inches wider than the perimeter of the patio or walkway.

- Before you dig, have a professional mark the location of any electrical or gas lines. By dialing 811, you'll be connected to your local utility company for assistance—free of charge.
- Check with your Lowe's associate for the correct depth in your region.
- The foundation should slope away from the center at a decline of 1" every 4' for drainage. If your patio will lie against your house, slope the foundation away from the house.
- Measure the distance from the house to the farthest stake to determine the grade.
- Then mark the decline on the farthest stake with a second set of strings.
- Remove the sod in strips.
  - Save the sod to patch areas around the patio after it's installed. Just water it to keep it moist.
- If you have an existing set of stairs, excavate around and under it.
- Continue digging to the appropriate depth for your region.
  - You can use a garden tiller to help loosen the soil.
  - Periodically check the trench to make sure it is the correct depth.



#### IMPORTANT

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing a patio or walkway foundation. The depth required for your trench will vary by region, so check local building codes and recommendations. Laying the foundation for a patio requires extensive digging and lifting. If you are not comfortable preparing your foundation, call a professional for help.

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#### 02 Compact the base with a hand tamper or rented plate compactor.

### LAY THE PATIO/PAVER BASE

#### 01 Lay the landscape fabric over the ground.

- In some areas it is preferable to lay the fabric over the paver base. Ask your Lowe's associate for the requirements in your region.

#### 02 Fill the trench with patio/paver base.

- Check the requirements for your area. Our installation requires 4" of base.

#### 03 Lightly wet the patio/paver base so that it clumps together, but not so much that it drips.

#### 04 Run a compactor over the material several times until the base is solid and uniform.



### LAY THE PAVER SAND

The uniformity of this grade is very important. Our foundation requires 1" of paver sand.

#### 01 Lay a few pieces of 1" PVC pipe parallel to each other on the compacted base.

#### 02 Add enough sand to cover the pipes.

#### 03 Slide the 2x4 perpendicularly across the pipes in the trench to level the sand.

- This process is called screeding.

#### 04 Remove the pipes.

- You'll fill these trenches as you lay the pavers.

#### 05 Lightly mist the sand with water.



Now you're ready to lay the patio pavers. For the next step of this patio installation, check out *How to Install a Paver Patio* at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).

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