01 Plot the bed.
- Use mason's string and stakes to initially mark the bed.
- For rectangular beds, make sure the area is square by measuring the diagonals. If they are equal, the bed is square.
- Move the stakes to make any necessary adjustments.
- Spray the lines with marking paint.
- Random curves
  - To make a random curve on the corner, lay a hose in the desired curve pattern.
  - Then cover the hose with sand.
  - Lift the hose and the sand will mark the curve.
- Radial curves
  - To make a uniform curve, tie a piece of string to a stake that is equal distance from the two adjacent edges.
  - Tie the other end of the string to your can of marking paint. You've just made a compass.
  - Spray from one edge to the other pivoting on the stake, forming a curve at the corner.

02 Determine the supplies you'll need.
- Measure the square footage of the bed with a tape measure.
- Bring that number to Lowe's along with the intended height of your retaining wall. Ask a Lowe's associate about convenient delivery of all your materials.
BUILD A RETAINING WALL WITH A RAISED BED

PREPARING THE FOUNDATION (cont.)

03 **Excavate the entire area 6" to 12" deep and about 4" wider than the perimeter of the blocks.**
   - If the ground slopes, step the trench up or down to keep the base level.
   - Check it with a carpenter’s level.

04 **Compact the bottom of the trench with a plate tamper.**

05 **Lay down 3" to 6" of Patio/Paver base to give the wall stability.**
   - The Patio/Paver base is ¾” and smaller gravel that compacts well.

06 **Rake the gravel and check it again for level.**

07 **Compact it with the tamper.**

BUILDING THE WALL

01 **Place the first block on the base.**
   - For a rectangular bed, start on the corner.
   - For a circular bed, you can start anywhere.
   - For a bed against a wall, start at the wall.
   - If you’re using flanged blocks, knock off the flange of the first row with a hammer and chisel.

02 **Level the block with a carpenter’s level.**

03 **Continue laying the first row, making any height adjustments with small amounts of sand and a rubber mallet.**
   - Leveling of the first course of block is critical. If done correctly, the rest of the job will go quickly and easily.

04 **If needed, cut the block for the curve in a pie shape.**
   - Be sure to wear eye, ear, and dust protection.
   - Simply mark the blocks along the radius, and cut with the masonry saw.

05 **You may need a partial block to complete the first row.**
   - Mark a full block to the correct length.
   - Cut it with the masonry saw.
   - If you didn’t cut a block to finish your first row, you’ll need to cut one to start the second row to stagger the joints.
BUILDING THE WALL (cont.)

06 Continue building the wall.

07 Add drainage pipes to walls 2' and over. This keeps water from building up behind the wall. (Skip this step if your wall is under 2'.)
- When you have two rows complete, lay a 4” perforated drainpipe on the gravel behind the blocks.
- Make sure that it is pitched to one side, about 1" for every 8'.
- One end of the pipe should stay unobstructed so that the ground water can escape.

08 Backfill every two rows with gravel.
- For a raised bed, build the last 12" without backfilling. This space is for topsoil.

09 Before laying the last row of blocks in place, apply construction adhesive to the top of the last blocks.

10 Place landscape fabric over the gravel to create a barrier between it and your topsoil.

11 Pour topsoil over the fabric to fill the bed.

12 Plant flowers and shrubs to finish the look.

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