



Let's Build Something Together™

Skill Level: ADVANCED Try these projects after you have a collection of DIY successes under your belt, and make sure you're ready for a challenge. You'll need experience with a wide variety of specialized tools, and it may take several hours to finish. If you've built a deck or installed an irrigation system, these projects probably match your abilities.

✓ MATERIALS

- Tape Measure
- Paper
- Pencil
- Lowe.com/DeckDesigner

Welcome to Lowe's six-part series, *How to Build a Deck*. You'll learn what you need to know to build your own deck, from design to footings to railings. This first instruction sheet and video, *Designing a Deck*, shows you how to design and plan your new space.

DESIGNING A DECK

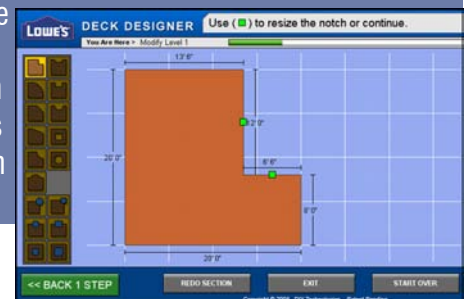
The process of designing a comfortable, practical and safe deck is easy. Begin with the following instructions.

01 Contact your local building department or homeowner's association to verify deck requirements and restrictions.

- Some zoning ordinances limit deck size, location and some even prohibit deck construction. In most cases, to begin any construction you'll need to apply for a building permit and will be subject to inspection by a building inspector.
- **TIP:** If your town has restrictions on deck construction, you might be able to apply for a variance. A variance is a request to perform some type of new construction or alteration that is otherwise not permitted by zoning regulations.

02 Use a tape measure, paper and pencil to begin planning and sketching your deck.

- Make sure you include the location of your house, including windows and doors. Also indicate the location of primary landscaping, such as trees, and other structures, such as sheds.
- If you take a rough sketch of your deck to Lowe's, we can turn it into a professional blueprint.
- **TIP:** You can develop professional plans for your deck online. Visit Lowe.com/DeckDesigner. Our program takes you through every step of the design process and will create a 3-D image of your deck so you can visualize it before you build it. The design program also produces a list of materials you will need for your deck. You can then print out the design and materials list.



IMPORTANT

Before you begin this project, watch all of the videos and read all of the instruction sheets in the Lowe's *How to Build a Deck* series. If you are not comfortable planning and building a deck, discuss the job with a Lowe's associate. Lowe's can take care of any or all of deck construction from blueprints to material selection to finishing.

DESIGNING A DECK (cont.)

03 Locate your deck.

- Decide whether your deck will be accessed directly from a house exit or will be located away from the house.
 - A detached or freestanding deck is supported by two or more beams, depending on its size. It can be installed next to your house or anywhere in your yard, including next to or around a swimming pool. If away from the house, plan access to the deck via a path or walkway.
 - Attached decks replace one of the support beams with a ledger board that is physically attached to the house with bolts. The design reduces material costs, but can increase chances of water or pest damage to the house. Most building codes require that a metal flashing be installed to prevent moisture from penetrating between the ledger and the house wall. In addition, the ledger must be treated to minimize pest and mold infiltration.
- Consider what view you will have from your deck and whether you will require a privacy wall for some or all of the deck.
- You may be able to use shade from a nearby tree to keep the deck cool in the summer. Or place your deck away from a line of shrubs to allow a cool breeze to pass through.
- **TIP:** If you're building a two-story deck that requires a long stairway, a landing (small transition deck) is helpful to break up the stairway. Plan where the stairs will be connected to the deck and where they will end below.



04 Determine size and function.

- If you're going to frequently entertain guests, a larger deck will be suitable for chairs, tables, a grill and other outdoor furniture. If you're just looking for a comfortable, pleasant retreat, a smaller deck will work just fine.
- Considerations:
 - Avoid a layout that places a railing in the middle of a window on the house.
 - Make sure that house doors or windows that swing outward will clear the railings. If necessary, adjust the size or location of your deck.



DESIGNING A DECK (cont.)

05 Choose a style.

- A deck with few architectural lines made from clear lumber with sleek, metal balusters (vertical railing) offers a contemporary look.
- For a more traditional look, use lumber with lots of grain lines and turned balusters.

06 Select deck construction materials.

- Pressure-treated lumber is strong and typically the least expensive of materials. Wood decking exposed to extreme elements requires weather-sealing and more frequent staining.
- Heart cedar and heart redwood are naturally resistant to decay. Sapwood cedar and redwood are not resistant to decay and will require additional treatment with a preservative. Because heart woods are more expensive, some decks are designed to use them where they are visible and use pressure-treated woods where they are not seen.
- Composite decking materials offer significant design flexibility, require less maintenance and are as durable as wood. Composite materials are a better choice for regions that are exposed to extreme climates. Ecologically, composite decks are a good choice as most are manufactured from wood and plastic fibers from reclaimed or recycled sources.



07 Consider colors.

- If your deck will receive a lot of sunlight, choose a lighter colored material. Darker colors absorb and radiate heat.

08 Plan for maintenance. Ask a Lowe's associate for the appropriate maintenance steps for your decking material of choice.

Those are some of the things to consider when designing a deck. There are many different ways to build a deck, too. For some extra help and construction tips, check out one of the many instructional books available at Lowe's. Also view the videos and printable instructions in the *How to Build a Deck* series available at [Lowe's.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos). The next part of this series covers *Deck Layouts*—marking footings to prepare for construction.

These "How-To's" are provided for informational purposes only. The information contained in Lowe's "How-To" videos is intended to provide general guidance to simplify jobs around the house. Because tools, products, materials, techniques, building codes and local regulations are continually changing, Lowe's assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained herein and disclaims any liability for omissions, errors or the outcome of any project. It is the responsibility of the viewer to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, rules, codes and regulations for a project. The viewer must always take proper safety precautions and exercise caution when taking on any project. If there is any question or doubt in regards to any element of a project, please consult with a licensed professional.