



Creating an Outdoor Room

A Step-by-Step Guide

When hiring a landscape designer use this comprehensive guide to help you create the perfect outdoor room.

Step 1: Determine the purpose of the space.

- Will the space be for relaxing, playing, dining, cooking, or a mix of these?
- How many people will the space need to accommodate?

Step 2: Walk your property.

- How much space do you have and what is the layout like?
- What would you like to keep and what you like to change?

Step 3: Start a wish list.

- Collect ideas from the Internet and magazines.
- Build a file of designs, products and ideas that you like.

Keep the style of your home in mind to ensure that your outdoor space will accentuate your indoor spaces.

Step 4: Go window-shopping.

- Visit a retail showroom for outdoor products and do some browsing.
- Locate a retailer using the online tool from the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association

Go online and look up the products you are considering. Read manufacturer information and customer reviews.

Step 5: Think from the ground up.

- Decide on the best decorative concrete finish for your patio. Visit the
- Artisticstoneworks.com photo gallery to see examples of how color and texture can be incorporated into concrete.
- Make sure patio size is large enough to accommodate desired dining and seating areas.

Step 6: Make a plan.

- Sketch out your vision.
- Position a fire feature as the focal point of your outdoor space.
- Locate cooking and eating areas for optimum function and comfort.
- Divide the space into multiple areas, giving the feel of separate rooms.

Step 7: Find a professional contractor.

- Visit Artisticstoneworks.com for a local contractor that can install your outdoor living options.
- Run conduit for electrical, gas, and water prior to pouring concrete (Steps 9 and 10 will be much easier if you've planned ahead).

Step 8: Add patio furniture.

- Incorporate a dining or conversation set into your space to create an inviting and comfortable atmosphere.

Step 9: Accentuate with landscaping.

- Consult your local nursery or a professional landscape designer for help with selecting and placing the perfect plants to complement your outdoor room design.

Step 10: Add the final details.

- Add the finishing touches to your outdoor living space.
- Consider lighting to enhance pathways, water features and electronics.
- Don't forget to decorate—hang artwork on the walls, add throw pillows and a colorful umbrella—it's the final touches that complete an outdoor room.

A Word of Advice

Don't be overwhelmed by all there is to do. Take your outdoor living project one chunk at a time. You can even space the work out over a few years. After you have a plan, we suggest beginning with the hardscape (Steps 5-7), then adding furniture (Step 8), next landscaping (Step 9), and finally, finish off your space with accessories (Step 10).