

## Design the Perfect Deck: 5 Must-ask Questions Before you Start

(BPT) - A backyard should be enjoyed to its fullest extent. But all too often, homes lack enticing outdoor living areas. One way to give your outdoor space a retreat is to add a new deck. A well-designed deck can extend your living space, make your yard more functional and, best of all, provide a comfortable space for family and friends to enjoy the great outdoors.



If you're ready to build a new deck and turn your backyard into your favorite "room" in the house, here are five must-ask questions to help you design the perfect addition.

### 1. What do you want your deck to do?

A deck can boost the value of your yard, but only if it fits the way you live. So, before tackling a deck project, set aside time to think about how you plan to use your new space. Whether you're designing a multi-level deck for entertaining or a small, peaceful getaway, a little forethought can go a long way to ensuring your deck suits your family's lifestyle.

For example, if outdoor entertaining is what your deck is all about, an expansive deck with multiple level changes, handrails and furniture can streamline traffic flow and define areas for eating, socializing and relaxing. If a peaceful deck-escape is more your style, a free-standing deck tucked into some foliage in your backyard with a screening trellis and a water feature can create a perfectly restful retreat.

### 2. How will you access your deck?

As you evaluate your deck's function, keep transitions in mind. The easier your deck is to access, the more you'll get out of it. Decks positioned near frequently used openings, such as the kitchen door, make it simple to travel from one area to the other and are perfect for entertaining. Additional pathway features, like decorative stones and ground lighting, can help guests transition smoothly between your deck and yard.

If you have a raised or multi-level deck, be sure to think about stairs and railings. While these features make it safe to move between your house and backyard, they can also add visual distinction to your deck. Curved stairs, decked out walkways, backlit risers and decorative glass panels can all showcase your creativity while guiding visitors through outdoor living spaces.

### 3. Is your deck near water?

If you envision lounging waterside, now is the time to think about moisture-resistant decking. Decks near pools, hot tubs and lakes need to withstand frequent exposure to waves, splashing and, in some instances, full water submersion to stay beautiful for years to come.

While there are many decking materials from which to select, advanced products like ChoiceDek composite decking are a great choice for decks with water contact as they protect against moisture intrusion all the way to each board's core. "The boards are so durable they can be installed on the ground, in the ground or underwater without voiding their 25-year warranty. They keep moisture at bay so homeowners don't have to worry about their deck's long-term beauty," says Randy Gottlieb, president of ChoiceDek composite decking.

### 4. How do you want your deck to look?

To make sure your new addition is as big on looks as it is on function, spend time dreaming about how you want your deck to look. Whether you favor sleek, clean lines or more adventurous deck patterns, the secret to a beautiful backyard deck is to make sure it ties-in with your home's architecture.

You can select from a wide array of decking color combinations that complement indoor flooring options, including popular greys and rich dark browns. Or, use contrasting colors to balance your home's exterior color scheme. If you love the look of wood but don't want to deal with all the upkeep, look for modern composites that mimic the appearance of traditional wood decking. Their realistic wood grains blend beautifully into the landscape, and complement many of today's exterior siding options.

### 5. Are you designing a curved deck?

If you're still looking for a way to set your yard apart, consider incorporating curves into your deck design. Curves can add architectural interest by following the contours of your landscape, encircling hot tubs and pools, or contrasting the straight lines of your house.

Get creative, but don't let materials limit your design. By following manufacturer instructions, you can shape contemporary materials like composite decking into stunning curves that will have neighbors commenting on your deck for years to come.