

## 3 Questions to Ask Yourself When Designing a Brick Paver Patio

In the past a patio was just a patio; a concrete slab at the rear entrance of your home with just enough space to put a patio table and maybe a small BBQ grill. The terms "Outdoor Living Space" or "Outdoor Rooms" weren't even heard of and the only people that had these types of outdoor spaces were the rich and famous. Today, with the demand for homeowners wanting to spend more time outdoors these terms have become more a part of daily life. This demand has not only forced landscape contractors to be more creative with their patio designs, but has created an industry within itself. All of your big box stores are catering to this industry with patio furniture, stainless steel grills, pre-built grill stations, portable fire pits and it is not unusual to see contractors who specialize or only design and install patios.



Due to the increasing popularity of concrete patio pavers, homeowners are no longer satisfied with the standard rectangle concrete slab. Concrete patio pavers allow patio designers to be much more creative in implementing you patio ideas. They can utilize radial and circular paver designs, different paver patterns, borders and colors. Also, the introduction of patio block has changed the way patios are designed and used. Each manufacturer has a different name for them, but in a nut shell they are stackable blocks that can be used to create seating walls, columns, grill stations, outdoor bars and kitchens. If you can imagine it, you can build it with these blocks.



If you're looking for a nice brick patio; one that you can not only show off, but also one you can use; there are several guidelines to follow to improve your chances of success. There are three questions that you should ask yourself. If you answer these questions honestly you will be able to create a patio design that is not only functional, but also beautiful.

**"What is my budget?"** Some homeowners feel that this is a loaded question, but it is one that a good paver contractor will ask and one that needs to be addressed. It should be asked, not to prequalify you as a potential customer or to run the price up, but to verify that your patio ideas are realistic with your budget. As a homeowner, you should not be afraid to tell your contractor your budget. A good contractor's price is his price and he will design to your budget and may be able to give you an approximate cost of a paver patio.

**"How will I use my patio?"** Other than budget this is the most important question to ask you're self. If

you plan on entertaining, you may consider seating walls around portions of your brick paver patio for overflow seating or an outdoor bar. If you have children you may want to invest in a fire pit area, either a portable or built-in. These are great to spend quality time with your children. Do you like to grill out? Perhaps adding a BBQ grill station or outdoor kitchen might be a nice addition. However you choose to use your brick patio, you need to convey these uses to your patio designer so they can incorporate them into the patio design. Make sure your designer draws your patio design to an identifiable scale. Have them draw in your patio furniture and accessories so you can get an idea if, and how, they will fit on your patio. These questions will help you decide what size of patio you need to install to accommodate your patio ideas. Remember, bigger doesn't mean more functional. Also, keep in mind, if your wants exceed your budget, using brick or concrete patio pavers will allow you to seamlessly add on later.



**"What do I want my brick patio to look like?"** This is another important piece of the puzzle and one that you should also spend time with. A good patio designer will integrate your uses into a pleasing design. One that will accentuate certain features of your home while expanding your personality to the outside. The most difficult part of a patio design idea is the marriage between functionality and aesthetics. Brick and concrete patio pavers give you a lot of design flexibility. Radial designs typically will soften corners and create interesting curves. Square and rectangle patio designs, whether parallel with the house or on a 45 degree angle, are used to accentuate dimensional features of a home. Using different colors and/or styles of pavers in different areas will help define space on your patio. For example, a circle pattern may define a fire pit area.

**"Do your homework!"** The more time you invest at the front end of your patio project, the easier and more enjoyable the installation will be. Spending a few hundred dollars on a formal brick patio design may end up saving you several thousand dollars and aggravation. There are also websites with large libraries of pre-designed patios that you can browse and purchase for a fraction of the cost of a custom design. They typically provide you with additional information such as; material list, color palettes and product details, helpful installation tips and how to's.

Remember, do your homework and enjoy your patio!

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6645 Chrisman Lane  
Middletown, OH 45042

513-727-8469

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