

I've recently bought a home with a gorgeous backyard, but no deck to appreciate it. With warmer months ahead, I'm ready to build a deck that allows the whole family to enjoy our new backyard! Where do I start?

Great question! You're not alone—many homeowners ask us this when they're ready to create their ideal outdoor space. The best place to start is with a budget. Deck projects can range widely in cost, so it's important to determine what you're comfortable investing.

Once you have a budget in mind, start thinking about the look and layout. If you're not sure where to begin, browsing inspiration photos online can help. Compare different designs to your backyard to see what might work best. Color selection is another key factor—while digital images can give you ideas, nothing beats seeing the materials in person. Many local building material suppliers, including Ironstone, have showrooms where you can view decking options and take samples home to compare with your home's exterior.

DIY or Hire a Contractor?

Next, decide how hands-on you want to be. You have two main approaches:

- **DIY Approach** – If you're tackling the project yourself, take advantage of online tools that simplify deck planning. We like to use Simpson Strong-Tie's Deck Planner, but there are plenty of other

resources to explore. And just because you're DIYing doesn't mean you're on your own—local suppliers can be a great resource for advice, so don't hesitate to ask for help.

- **Hiring a Contractor** – If you'd rather leave it to the pros, just flip through the pages of R&A! It's a great resource for finding skilled deck builders in the area. Many remodelers specialize in outdoor living spaces and can bring your vision to life efficiently.

Choosing Decking & Railing

Material selection is one of the biggest decisions you'll make. Traditional pressure-treated wood is beautiful, but requires significant annual maintenance. Composite decking offers the same natural look with no upkeep, making it a go-to choice for many homeowners. PVC decking is another durable, low-maintenance option to consider that comes in a variety of colors. Warranties may differ for composite and PVC decking, which is worth thinking about, too.

Beyond appearance, think about these factors:

- **Sun Exposure** – How much direct sunlight does your deck get? Some materials stay cooler underfoot than others.
- **Budget Alignment** – Does the material you want fit your budget?
- **Maintenance Commitment** – How much upkeep are you willing to take on?
- **With railing**, vinyl and alumi-

num are the most popular choices due to their durability, affordability, and easy installation. Railing design affects both safety and aesthetics, so consider:

- **Grip & Accessibility** – Can all family members grasp the rail comfortably?
- **Visibility** – Traditional balusters are great, but there are more options. Do you prefer open views with cable railing or more privacy with infill boards? Consider Wild Hog wire as a high-visibility, lower-cost alternative to cable railing.
- **Style** – Your railing should complement your deck's design and home's exterior.

Other Key Considerations

Before you start building, make sure to check for any necessary permits. If you're working with a contractor, they'll handle this for you, but DIYers should research local regulations to avoid any surprises down the road.

Final Thoughts

A well-planned deck can enhance your backyard and add value to your home, so take the time to explore your options. If you need guidance, local experts like us are always happy to help. Stop in to visit us on Hempland Road. And when your deck is complete, send us a picture—we'd love to see how it turns out!

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