

BASICS OF BUILDING DRY LAID STONE PATIOS AND PATHS

Materials Needed

Shovel
Rake
Wheelbarrow
Level
String Line
Rock Hammer
Chisel
Rubber Hammer
Compactor
Marking Paint
Hose
Broom



Before you begin:

- 1) Mark out the designated area using marking paint.
- 2) Calculate the approximate square footage of the patio. This is found by multiplying the length by the width.
- 3) Once the total square footage is known, you can choose the type of stone you'd like to use and can estimate how much you should order. Several different colors, shapes, and sizes of stone are available to choose from. The larger flagstones work well for patios as they tend to be more stable and provide a better base for furniture. The smaller step stones work best in narrower paths and patios. As a rule, for a dry laid patio, you should select a stone with a minimum thickness of at least 1 inch. Generally 1 ton of stone that is 1 – 2 inches thick will cover about 75 – 125 square feet.
- 4) ¼" minus gravel or sand is also needed. Sand is easier to work with, but ¼" minus gravel compacts better and doesn't wash away as easily. As a general guideline, 1 yard (compacted) covers about 100 square feet x 2-3 inches deep.

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Installation:

- 1) Check local building codes for restrictions and always call appropriate utility companies before digging.
- 2) Either excavate approximately 3 – 6 inches of soil from the area or build on top of the grade using forms or other types of stones for a border. You need to allow for at least 2 inches of compacted sand or gravel as a base for the patio, plus the thickness of the actual stone.
- 3) It is recommended that lay down a weed barrier or filter cloth first. This helps prevent weeds from establishing deep roots and, more importantly, helps keep your base material from absorbing into the ground. Spread out the base material and then compact it until you have a firm, level base. Use a fine spray of water before and after you are done to help it compact even more.
- 4) Start laying the stones in your desired pattern. Remember to try and keep the spaces in between the stones as consistent as possible. The most common joint widths are $\frac{1}{2}$ " – 1" wide. Use a rock hammer and chisel or cut the stones as needed to achieve your desired fit.
- 5) Seat the stones into your base by tapping with a rubber hammer and/or by wiggling back and forth until set. Add sand or gravel to low areas and remove it from high spots as needed. Check with a level or string line as you go. There should be a slight slope towards the edges or end of the patio to allow for drainage.
- 6) When you are finished laying the stones, sweep more $\frac{1}{4}$ " minus or sand over the top to fill in the joints and gaps and then water with a light spray to help settle. Repeat as necessary. It may take a while for the sand or gravel to settle completely and you may have to fill in low spots until it is completely settled. If you would like to have moss or other ground covers grow in the joints, consider using topsoil instead of the sand or gravel.

