



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

How to Build a Fire Pit

Adding a fire pit to your backyard can create a cozy gathering spot for family and friends. Whether you're roasting marshmallows or simply enjoying the warmth, a fire pit makes for an inviting outdoor feature. Here's how to build your own fire pit step-by-step.

1 Choose your location: Start by selecting a safe spot in your yard for the fire pit. Make sure it's at least 10 feet away from structures or overhanging branches, and opt for a flat area that is easy to level.

2 Gather your materials: You'll need fire bricks, retaining wall blocks, a shovel, gravel and construction adhesive. A fire ring is also recommended to contain the fire safely.

3 Prepare the base: Mark the fire pit area with a shovel or spray paint, then dig about six to 12 inches deep. Fill the hole with gravel to create a stable base, which helps with drainage.

4 Lay the blocks: Place the retaining wall blocks in a circle, stacking them two to three layers high to form the walls of your fire pit. Make sure each layer is level, and use construction adhesive between the layers for added stability.

5 Add the fire ring: Place the fire ring inside the block walls. This will help prevent the fire from spreading and protect the stone walls from excessive heat damage.

6 Finishing touches: Once the fire pit structure is complete, fill the bottom with a few inches of gravel. This will help with drainage and reduce the buildup of ash. Now, your fire pit is ready to use!



Incorporating Vintage Items into Modern Design

Combining vintage pieces with modern decor can add character and depth to your home. Here are a few tips to seamlessly blend the old and the new:

- **Mix and match textures:** Pair modern smooth finishes with vintage items like distressed wood or aged metal for an intriguing contrast.
- **Statement vintage pieces:** Use a standout vintage item, like an ornate mirror or antique dresser as a focal point in a room.
- **Balance with neutral colors:** Vintage items often have intricate details. Keep the color palette neutral to avoid overwhelming the space.
- **Functional decor:** Repurpose vintage items as functional decor, like using an old trunk as a coffee table or vintage crates for storage.
- **Minimalism matters:** Less is more. Incorporate just one or two vintage pieces to maintain a clean, modern look while adding personality.

By thoughtfully combining vintage and modern elements, you can create a unique, inviting space that tells a story and feels truly your own.

Pros and Cons of a Tankless Water Heater

Tankless water heaters are becoming a popular choice for many homeowners. Before deciding if it's right for you, consider the pros and cons:

Pros:

- **Energy efficiency:** Tankless water heaters only heat water as needed, which can reduce energy bills compared to traditional units that maintain a constant temperature.
- **Endless hot water:** Since water is heated on demand, you won't run out of hot water, making them ideal for larger households.
- **Space saving:** These heaters are compact and can be installed in small spaces, freeing up room compared to bulky tank units.
- **Longer lifespan:** With proper maintenance, tankless water heaters typically last longer than traditional tank models.

Cons:

- **Higher initial cost:** Tankless units and installation can be more expensive upfront compared to traditional water heaters.
- **Limited flow rate:** If multiple appliances are using hot water simultaneously, a tankless heater may struggle to keep up.
- **Complex installation:** Retrofitting a tankless system can require extensive changes to the home's plumbing and gas lines, increasing installation costs.



Buying or selling a home can seem like an overwhelming task. A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) can make the process easier—and more profitable. A CRS, with years of experience and success, will help you make smart decisions in a fast-paced, complex and competitive marketplace.

To earn the CRS Designation, residential real estate specialists must demonstrate outstanding professional achievements—including high-volume sales—and pursue advanced training in areas such as finance, marketing and technology. Contact your CRS today!

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE THOMSEN TEAM, A MEMBER
OF THE RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE COUNCIL**