Design and Build a Custom Fire Pit

DIY Step-by-Step

Style

- Different shapes can be built with different types of retaining wall blocks. Kits are available that include the blocks and a metal ring insert.
- In-ground fire pits sit just below the yard surface.

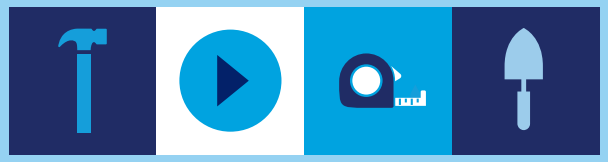
Location

- Place at least 10-ft from the property line, flammables and foliage. Follow local codes.
- Consider the wind pattern and smoke potentially blowing through open windows.
- Size will also determine the best location.

Prepare the Base

- Outline the shape of the fire pit with the blocks.
- Check that the layout is square with a framing square.
- Cut the outline into the sod with a shovel.
- Remove the sod and 2- to 3-in of soil. If drainage is a concern, dig a deeper hole in the center and fill with gravel.

  Tip: Keep some sod to fill in bare spots later.
- Tamp the soil down and check for level.
- Add 2-in of gravel paver base, wet and tamp.
- Add another ½-in of paver base and tamp more to level.

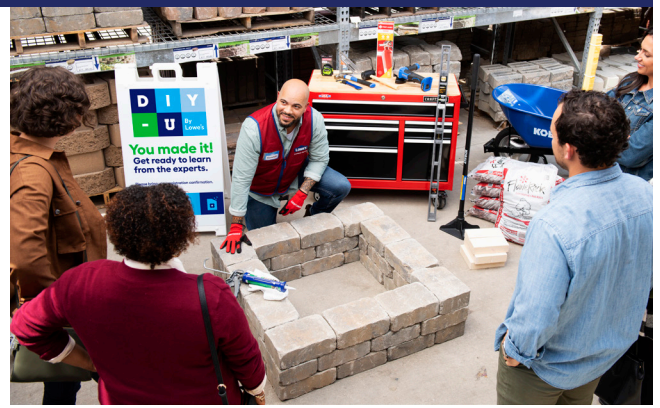


Set the First Course of Blocks

- Set the first course of blocks on the base.
- Check with a level and make sure the tops of the blocks are even.
- If the blocks sit low, add a little bit of paver base underneath.
- If the blocks sit high, tap with a rubber mallet.
- Use a square to double-check that the first course remains square.

Set the Second and Third Courses of Blocks

- Set the second layer of blocks, staggering the joints on the first course.
- Check that the tops and sides are even with a level.
- If a fire pit structure stands higher than 2-ft, ventilation will ensure proper air circulation. For proper airflow, you'll want to have about a 2-in hole or gap every 24-36 inches around the structure.
- Some fire pit designs may require cutting the blocks. Cutting tool options include: a wet saw, a circular saw with concrete blade, angle grinder and hammer and chisel.
- Once a solid fit on the second layer is established, remove the blocks one at a time to apply landscaping adhesive to the top of layer one.
- Reposition the blocks and repeat for the third course.

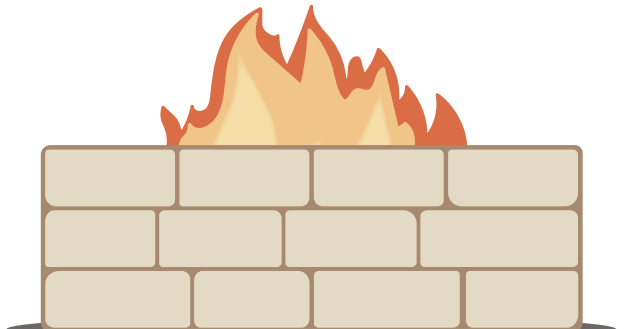


Interior Side Walls

- Protect the retaining wall blocks from high heat with fire brick or a fire pit metal ring insert.
- Use gravel or lava rocks to create a base for the fire brick and to help hold them against the blocks.
- Raising the base of the fire near the top of the pit helps radiate heat.

Safety

- Always have a fire extinguisher ready.
- Never leave a burning fire unattended.
- Follow local codes.



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Tools & Materials List

- ☐ _____ Tape Measure
- ☐ _____ Retaining Wall Blocks
- ☐ _____ Wheelbarrow
- ☐ _____ Paver Base
- ☐ _____ Angle Grinder with Cut-Off Wheel
- ☐ _____ Rubber Mallet
- ☐ _____ Fire Brick or Metal Ring Insert
- ☐ _____ Saftey Glasses
- ☐ _____ Framing Square
- ☐ _____ Garden Rake
- ☐ _____ Tamper
- ☐ _____ Circular Saw with Concrete Blade
- ☐ _____ Caulk Gun
- ☐ _____ Lava Rocks
- ☐ _____ Work Gloves
- ☐ _____ Shovel
- ☐ _____ Level
- ☐ _____ Stone Chisel and Hammer
- ☐ _____ Landscape Adhesive
- ☐ _____ Fire Extinguisher

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