

Considerations for Building a Retaining Wall

1. Understanding Drainage

Effective drainage is perhaps the most critical aspect of retaining wall design. Poor drainage can lead to water buildup behind the wall, creating hydrostatic pressure that can cause the wall to fail. Figure out which drainage solution (or, better yet, solutions) will work best for your yard.



2. Choosing the Right Material

The choice of material affects both the appearance and the structural integrity of your retaining wall. Different materials have varying costs. To help you make your decision, find the sweet spot between your budget constraints and your desired aesthetic.

3. Assessing the Soil and Grading

Before construction, it's crucial to assess your soil type, as it affects the wall's foundation and stability. Clay soil needs careful drainage to prevent expansion and contraction, sandy soil drains well but may require added stabilization, and loamy soil is generally ideal but still benefits from a solid foundation and proper drainage.



4. Design and Engineering

For walls over 4 feet, consulting a structural engineer is often required to ensure stability and safety. Local building codes may regulate wall height, materials, and engineering standards, so check these and obtain permits before starting construction. Professional builders can help meet these requirements and build a safe, compliant retaining wall.

5. Aesthetic Considerations

Your retaining wall should complement the overall design of your landscape. Consider the existing or planned elements such as gardens, patios, and walkways. After your wall is complete, incorporate finishing touches or design features like lighting, planters, or seating areas to enhance functionality and visual appeal.



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