

Building Your Deck

Need help kicking off your project and not sure where to start? Use this simple guide to get your project going and ensure that you don't miss a beat. Read on to learn about the phases to building a deck that we'll go over.

PHASE 1

KEY CONSIDERATIONS: Things To Think About Before Starting Your Project

This phase covers things that you should think about early on in your planning so that you are prepared for them when it's time to build. This section helps you understand how different material selections or design elements may affect your overall build.

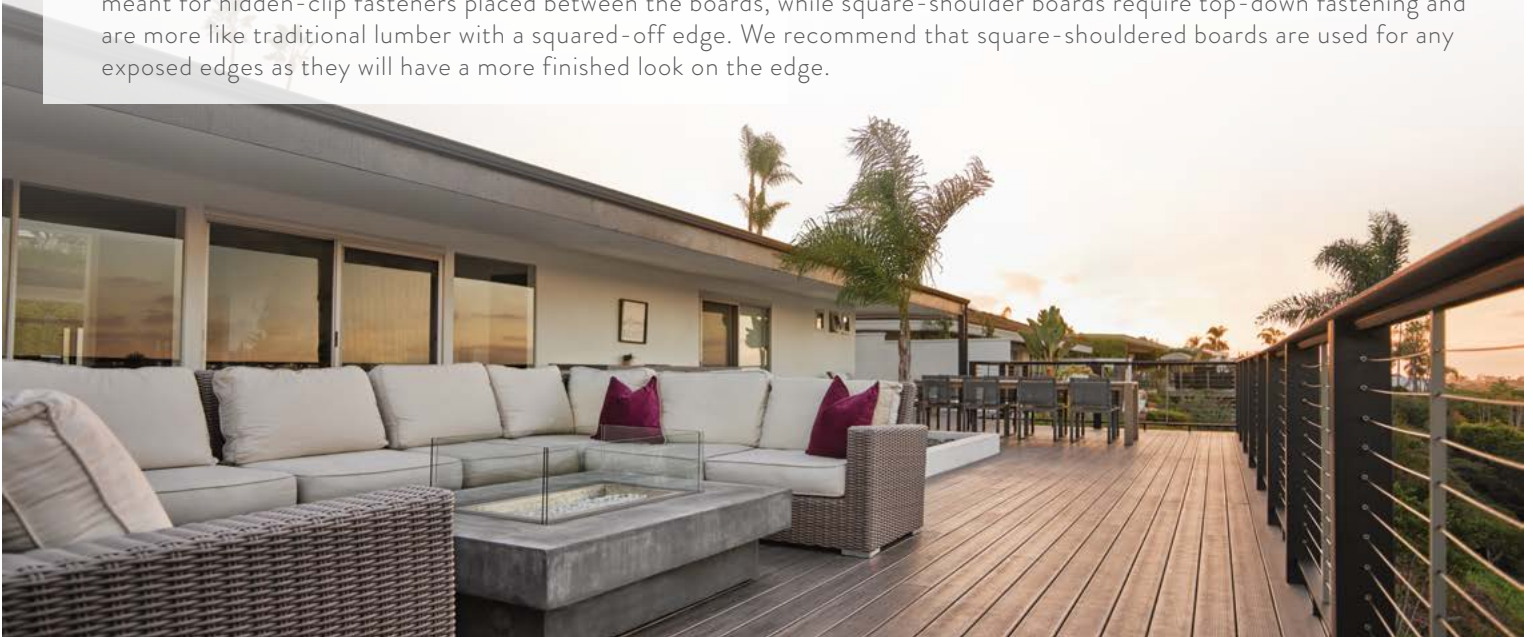
Substructure: Do you have an existing substructure on your home or are you starting from scratch? If you're starting from scratch, it may be a good idea to have a professional contractor help with this portion of your deck build to ensure code compliance and overall safety. If you have an existing substructure, is it in good enough shape to re-use? Will your substructure work for the new shape and design elements you are planning? Once you determine your plan for the substructure, check out our "[Joist Spacing and Blocking](#)" tutorial that will help you prep your substructure for installing TimberTech® decking.

Deck Sizes: When thinking about the size of the deck that might be best for your home, we encourage you to align the length and the width to match up with our board lengths and widths offered. This means, less cutting will be required.

- Our deck boards are offered in 12', 16', and 20' lengths. For example, a 12' x 20' deck along the length of your house would be a great option so that you could use 12' boards laid perpendicular to your house or 20' boards running parallel to your house.
- It is also helpful to determine the exact measurement of the width of the deck so that our 5.5" wide boards (check product for exact width) with a recommended 1/8" gap are able to be laid as full boards without having to rip-cut (cut lengthwise) a board at the end to align with your substructure and allows you to avoid overhanging the frame.

Decking Material: Depending on the decking you choose, you may need to account for additional steps when framing and fastening your deck.

- Be sure to read the full product installation guides available at TimberTech.com to understand all unique requirements. For example, TimberTech AZEK® capped polymer decking requires extra blocking at butt joints (when the ends of two boards meet), and TimberTech PRO® and TimberTech EDGE™ capped composite decking require pre-drilling for top-down fastening methods.
- Understand the board options. TimberTech offers both grooved and square-shouldered deck boards. Grooved boards are meant for hidden-clip fasteners placed between the boards, while square-shoulder boards require top-down fastening and are more like traditional lumber with a squared-off edge. We recommend that square-shouldered boards are used for any exposed edges as they will have a more finished look on the edge.



Design Elements: You may be considering a picture frame border to give your deck a nice, polished perimeter. Keep in mind that there will be additional steps for framing when you choose this option. Placing boards at a 45 degree angle is another great design element. You will have to account for some additional blocking as well as some added waste as the ends of the boards will need to be cut off. If you need help visualizing, visit our [Deck Designer Tool](#) to lay out your deck design virtually.

Fastening Options: TimberTech offers a wide variety of fastening options from traditional top-down fastening to clips designed specifically for grooved composite boards. There are also pneumatic options, if you prefer. Be sure to choose a fastening method up front so that you know if you should order grooved or square-shoulder boards.

■ Fastener Choices:



- **TOPLoc® Fasteners** are color-matched screws that blend perfectly with TimberTech decking colors. They are installed top-down using a standard drill/driver.

Note: TOPLoc for TimberTech PRO and TimberTech EDGE decking requires pre-drilling.



- **Cortex® Hidden Fasteners** are standard screws that are over-driven into TimberTech deck boards with a special bit and then filled with plugs made from the same TimberTech boards for a seamless appearance.

Note: Cortex for TimberTech PRO and EDGE decking requires pre-drilling.



- **CONCEALoc® Hidden Fasteners** are clips that are placed between grooved boards and installed with a drill/driver or a pneumatic gun.



- **FUSIONLoc® Hidden Fasteners** are another type of clip meant for grooved boards that can be hand-driven or installed with a pneumatic gun.



- **SIDELoc™ Hidden Fasteners** are unique for the TimberTech AZEK capped polymer decking like and use a guide to drive screws into the side of square-shoulder boards at an angle.

■ See an overview of all fastening options by clicking [here](#), then go to “Decking Videos”.

Railing: If you need railing for your deck (most local codes require railing for any deck that is 36” from the ground or more), there are two types of mounting options: through-mount and surface-mount. You need to figure out which method you will go with before laying deck boards.

- For railing that uses a 4”x4” wood post with a sleeve covering (like all TimberTech composite railing), an “in-frame” or “through-mount” railing installation is required. For this option you will need to be sure to place your posts in the frame prior to laying decking. Then, you will need to cut the deck boards to fit around the posts accordingly.
- Alternatively, for most metal railing installation (such as TimberTech Impression Rail Express®), a “surface-mount” installation is required where you lay all of your decking first, then mount your railing posts directly onto the decking.
- One other option is using the TimberTech Secure Mount Post in order to “surface-mount” railing that has post sleeves.

Regardless of the railing option you choose, you need to be thinking about this and decide and plan for which option is best for you before selecting your railing – and before laying your deck boards.

Stairs: There are unique requirements when installing TimberTech decking on stairs such as specific stringer spacing. Also, scalloped deck boards should only be used as a veneer (not as support) for stair applications. Please see the [decking installation guides](#) for full details on stair installation.

Finishing Touches: With a few extra – yet simple – steps, you can take your deck style to the next level.

- Consider adding fascia (rim Joist covers) to finish off the edge around the perimeter of the deck. TimberTech makes fascia boards that match the TimberTech decking you’ve chosen, or you can use white [AZEK trim](#).
- You also may want bottom skirting if you have a couple of feet of open area below your decking. TimberTech fascia or white AZEK trim are perfect options to add a type of cladding to conceal the space underneath your deck.
- Lighting is a great option to add ambiance and safety to any backyard. TimberTech offers in-deck lighting, riser board lighting, and railing accent lighting. The wiring for lighting should be laid out and planned prior to laying deck boards or installing railing.

Local Building Code: It is crucial to look up your local building code requirements before starting your project to be sure everything you’re planning is allowed in your area. Certain installation requirements are required to meet code in some areas – be sure to be well-versed in these requirements.

PHASE 2

PROJECT PREPARATION: It's time to nail down your plan

Now that you've considered your options and their implications, let's get a plan set. Use this section as a worksheet to keep track of all the details for your project.

- Have you obtained a required building permit: Yes or No?
- Will you use an existing sub-structure or build a new one? _____
- What will the size of your deck be? _____
- Will the boards be parallel or perpendicular to your home? _____
- Will you have extra design elements?
 - Picture Frame
 - Diagonal boards
 - Other: _____
 - None
- Will you add finishing touches?
 - Fascia boards
 - Bottom Skirting
 - Lighting
 - Other: _____

Choose your products and estimate the amount needed.

MATERIALS NEEDED:	PRODUCTS SELECTED:	ESTIMATED AMOUNT NEEDED:
Wood for substructure framing and blocking:		
Deck Boards:		
Fasteners:		
Railing (if needed): Typically sold in kits and packs.		
Fascia Boards (optional):		
Lighting (optional):		
Other: (For example: PRO-Tac Joist and Flashing Tape)		

■ **Make Sure You Have the Tools You'll Need**

- Safety glasses
- String line (to check that framing is level and in-plane across the tops)
- Hammer or mallet
- Replacement lumber, if needed (if required, generally at least 2" x 8")
- Drill

- Fasteners (exterior-grade fasteners for wood or wood composite decking)
- Miter saw / circular saw (we recommend that you do not use a cordless saw for cutting TimberTech deck boards as it can result in the end of the boards chipping)
- Tape measure
- Level (4" minimum)

■ **Purchase Products:** Head to your local [decking dealer or retail store](#) to purchase products. Please note that some TimberTech items may be available as “special order” only so allow for extra time to get these products.

■ **Determine Transportation/Delivery of Products:** Most dealers and retailers offer a delivery option.

Note: This information is meant to be used only as a general guideline for deck building projects. Specific applications may require different products and tools. Please consult your local dealer or retailer for help with estimating.

PHASE 3

PROJECT EXECUTION: Start Building

Now that you’ve laid out a solid plan for your deck and made all decisions on deck material, railing, fastener, and general shape and design, you’re ready to start building.

Using Your Existing Substructure or Creating a New One

- Confirm that your substructure is secure and properly fastened to the house. Consult a professional builder if you have questions about creating a substructure from scratch or properly securing your existing substructure.
- Be sure to prep your substructure for installing TimberTech decking. Your substructure joists need to be level and in plane across the tops and add blocking as needed.
- Add additional blocking for a Picture Frame design or Diagonal board placement.
- Install posts for railing using and in-frame/through-mount method or a surface-mount method.

Installing TimberTech Deck Boards

- Be sure to consult TimberTech decking installation guides for full instructions on how to properly install any of our decking products. Available [here](#) then click “Decking Guides” and “Decking Videos”.
- As we mentioned above, there are a number of other fastening options that you can use. See an overview of all fastening options [here](#), then go to “Decking Videos”.

Installing Railing

- Be sure to consult TimberTech railing installation guides for full instructions on how to properly install any of our railing products. Available at [here](#) then click “Railing Guides”.
- Learn how to install each unique railing by watching the videos available [here](#) then click “Railing Videos”.

Care & Cleaning

- If you need help with care & cleaning for your new deck or railing, please visit: <https://www.timbertech.com/resources/care-cleaning/>

You’re ready to build and enjoy your new TimberTech outdoor living space. If you have any questions or concerns, we’re here to help.

Call us at (877) 275-2935 to speak with a TimberTech rep. Want to see and feel TimberTech decking and railing in person?

[Visit a local dealer showroom](#) or [order free samples](#) to be delivered right to your front door.

Disclaimer

TimberTech AZEK® Decking & Rim Joist Covers should be installed using the same good building principals used to install wood or composite decking and in accordance with the local building codes and the Installation Guidelines included below. AZEK® Building Products accepts no liability or responsibility for the improper installation of this product. TimberTech AZEK Decking & Rim Joist Covers may not be suitable for every application and it is the sole responsibility of the installer to be sure that TimberTech AZEK Decking & Rim Joist Covers is fit for the intended use. Since all installations are unique, it is also the installer’s responsibility to determine specific requirements for each Deck application.

AZEK Building Products recommends that all applications be reviewed by a licensed architect, engineer or local building official before installation. To get more information visit www.TimberTech.com.

Prior to your purchase, AZEK Building Products also recommends that you review the full Installation Guidelines for more details regarding installation as well as information on care and maintenance, storage and handling, reference to warranty coverage, and other important product information. Installation Guidelines can be found at: <https://www.timbertech.com/resources/installation-help/>