



## HARDSCAPES & LANDSCAPES

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Fire Pits | Patios | Drainage | Sod | Grading  
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Natural Stone Work



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### A few ideas for finding and working with your first hardscaper:

#### Do your homework (and make sure they've done theirs):

The elements of hardscape that you don't see are just as important as the ones you do. So, make sure you're not just picking the professional with the most coolest design. Do background research and check references of projects that have already been done to make sure they are just as technically sound as they are artistic.

"There's a lot of things that you need to make sure the excavation is done properly that a homeowner might not be aware of," says Phil Bonifacio of Knoxville's Acadia Landscape Co. For example: not using soil as back-fill or the importance of compaction. That's is what a professional is for."

#### Be flexible on your first project:

There's a fine line between what you want and what you can do—especially when it comes to hardscape projects. You're going to be fired up and might have the Shangri-La in mind, but sometimes your space might not be ready for it. "A pro will be able to come in and check grade and degree," say Bonifacio. They also can and a lot of times will bring in a good architect or landscape designer that will be able to tell you what potential you have in your space." You probably won't have to dial down your dream project, you'll just need to find a different way to make it happen. This means listening, being flexible to approaches and meeting in the middle.

#### Communicate with more than words:

You can give jump-start your project quickly if you go into it with your ideas on paper. You don't have to an artist or a landscape expert. Just get down as much as you can on paper, including even the roughest drawing to get the real designer going.

"Make extensive notes and even sketches (no matter how rough) of what you want to accomplish," Bonifacio says. "Those are very useful to the professional and serve as a great conversational starting point to find out what the possibilities of your space are." 📍