

EPISODE #3026 WEATHER OR NOT

Laying Out The Deck

Lay out the deck plan on the lawn with stakes and string, to confirm the size and shape of the deck. (see fig. A)

- We are building a square floating deck (not attached to a building), with one corner “cut off” for a set of wide stairs.

Talk to an expert Carpenter or Contractor about wood types, designs, and building techniques

- We chose pressure treated wood for the substructure, and cedar for the visible part of the deck

Spray an outline of the finalized deck layout with surveyor’s florescent spray paint (see fig. B)

Getting Started

Lay pavers and patio stones

- Since the deck will not be attached to the house, we do not need to set posts below the frost line. In fact, the whole deck will be “floating” on concrete deck blocks set on level pavers, rather than anchored into the ground via posts.
- Pavers are prepared as follows: (see fig. C)
 - Dig down where the pavers will be placed
 - Place sand in the dug out area (improves drainage)
 - Make sure the area is level
 - Place the paver on the level sand

The lads want to keep the deck as low to the ground as possible. But they are building on an uneven slope, and they don’t want to do much digging. The paver in one corner of the deck area was sitting much higher than the others. This was a problem, because typical deck construction calls for a concrete deck block on top of the paver, and then a 4x4 deck post, on top of which the base beams of the deck will rest. Altogether, this translates into at least two feet of height above the paver.

Because this paver was already so high, this meant the deck was going to be quite far off the ground. As the rest of the deck area was much lower, the deck would be up to four feet off the ground in some places! One solution - dig the area under the highest paver down a few feet. More digging you say? Boooooooo!

Always on the lookout to make the job easier, the lads decided to rest the base beam



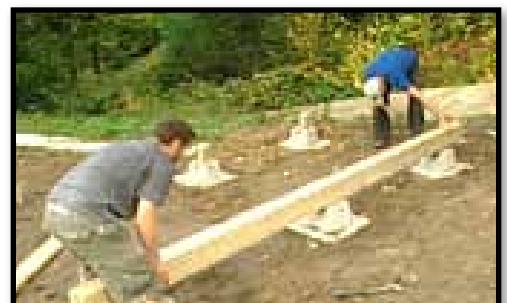
A. Laying out the deck plan.



B. Using spray paint to outline the layout.



C. Preparing for the paver.



D. Setting a base beam in place.

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right on this paver, rather than resting the beam on a 4x4 post sitting in a concrete deck block, sitting on this paver. This will let the deck be about a foot lower to the ground, without a lot of digging. (Yeah!)

Now for the rest of the corners

- On the rest of the pavers, place concrete deck blocks.
- Insert the first 4x4 deck post into a concrete block. Measure and cut it to the right height.
- Repeat. The deck posts are measured to the right height by using a straight board and level to transfer the height from post to post.

Beams & Joists

- Assemble and attach the base beams (see Figs. D & E)
- Nail three 2x8s together for maximum support
- Attach the base beams from one deck block to another
- Make sure they are level!

Square-up the frame with math

- Stay in school!
- To find the proper right (45 degree) angle use the Pythagorean theory ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$)
- Measure 3 feet down one side of a right angle, and measure 4 feet down the other. The length from point to point should be exactly 5 feet. (see fig. F)
- Tap or kick the frame into to place to adjust the across measurement to 5 feet
- Nail the frame to the 4x4 deck posts
- Stay in school!

Do a final level of the ground underneath the deck, to ensure proper run off

Measure and mark the locations of the joists (every 16 inches)

Attach the rim joist (the edge joist) to the base beam

- Make sure it's level and square!

Nail the joists every 16 inches, perpendicular to the rim joist, across the base beams

- If the joist wood is a little curved, place the joist with the curve side up, so the weight of the deck boards push the curve down and straighten out the joist (see fig. G & H)

Attach the other rim joist to the base beam and the joists

- We will be cutting off one corner of the frame and joists later for the stairs



E. Lookin' good!



F. Squaring up the frame.



G. Setting the deck joists.



H. Nailing the joists to the base beams.