

How to Design a Front Walkway

By Mary Hart

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Are you tired of running through the grass from your driveway to your front door and back every day and getting your shoes wet? Is that decline in your yard an eyesore rather than useable land? When you install a walkway and retaining wall, all your worries – and your ruined shoes – will be far behind you!

What exactly is a retaining wall and what can it do for your yard? “A retaining wall is used to keep back a portion of earth,” says Kellie Greer, Office Manager at Landscapers Depot in Kingston, NH. “Quite frequently, we are not able to effectively use all of our land because of hilly terrain. By utilizing a retaining wall you can cut into a hill or banking and excavate away that area thus creating a larger area of useable space. You can also have the opposite situation, where you have a steep decline. By installing a retaining wall, you are able to fill the area out to the retaining wall creating an area of useable land. Another use is more for aesthetics, a small garden wall, or a low planter to accent your landscaping.”

Before you even think about visiting a showroom or talking to a contractor, there are two things you need to do first. First, you need to figure out how much you have to spend on this project. In order to figure out the cost, you also need to figure out what size area you’re working with by measuring out the dimensions of where you intend to lay the walkway.

There are two main materials used for walkways: pavers and natural stone. “Concrete pavers at Landscapers Depot start at \$2.24 per sq. ft and can go as high as \$4.73 per sq. ft,” says Greer. “I would say the average is between \$2.34 and \$3.48 sq. ft. You would also need base materials, which would be a small percentage of the job cost.”

For a retaining wall, there “are so many choices,” says Greer. “You are no longer limited to the old poured concrete wall that required a costly footing and is susceptible to cracking. Another option would be natural stone; which while creating natural everlasting beauty also required a higher skill level that could result in higher cost. There are also the original segmented retaining walls that most people have seen before as well as many new styles that create a softer look of Antique style walls. The most important thing to keep in mind when choosing a wall is your finished wall height.”

How much should you budget for your retaining wall? Concrete segmented walls run from \$6.40 to \$13.75 per sq. ft., and 3,000 lb pallets of natural stone run from \$165 to \$533.75 per pallet.

Once you’ve taken a look at the options, it’s time to decide if you want to do the project yourself (which is do-able), or hire a landscaping professional. If you go the do-it-yourself route, read on to find out how to create the walkway of your dreams.

“In most cases,” says Greer, “the home owner can easily install a walkway or a small retaining wall. If it is a larger retaining wall over 4 feet high, there may be engineering involved and substantial excavation. In that case, we do also rent equipment. Some homeowners are capable of operating this equipment, while others would not feel comfortable. Whatever the case, when customers come in with their project, we can steer them in the right directions of the products that would be appropriate for their job and get a better idea if it’s a job they should attempt themselves or if it would be better in the

hands of a professional.”

Enjoy your new walkway and yard and go buy some new flowers to plant! To find out more about creating a walkway or retaining wall, visit or contact Landscapers Depot on Route 125 in Kingston, NH, 603-642-6677.

SIDEBAR

Top 10 tips for creating a walkway

1. Figure out your budget.
2. Figure out the dimensions of your walkway.
3. Go look at pavers and stones to see what you want.
4. Lay down crushed stone and bedding sand.
5. Start laying the pattern of your walkway with the pavers or stones.
6. Score the pavers and mark where they need to be cut.
7. Cut the pavers' edges to match the layout or have them cut.
8. Brush on polymeric sand to prevent weed growth.
9. Seal the pavers.
10. Edge the pavers.