# Deck Material & Framing Cheat Sheet

## Build a simple, long-lasting platform deck from the ground up.

Confidently select the right foundation blocks, protective tapes, and hidden fasteners. This guide helps you create a beautiful, stable backyard destination that lasts.



## Key Deck Dimensions

**4-6 in**
Dig depth to firm subsoil

**2-3 in**
Crushed gravel depth over weed barrier

**1 in per 4 ft**
Grading slope drop away from house

**16 in**
Pre-cast block spacing on center

**1-5/8 in**
Butyl joist tape width

**1/8 in**
Drainage gap from hidden track clips

**+10%**
Extra decking boards to order

*Acclimate Your Wood*

*Stack new cedar boards flat in the backyard for at least three full days before driving the first screw to prevent extreme shrinking, cracking, or warping.*

## Framing Sequence

1. **Prep the Base** Dig to subsoil, grade, lay barrier with 6-inch overlap, and tamp crushed gravel firmly.
2. **Set the Blocks** Place corner footings first, stretch a mason line, and check diagonal measurements for square.
3. **Build the Frame** Assemble pressure-treated joists with crown facing up, secure with hangers, and apply butyl tape.
4. **Install the Decking** Fasten cedar boards using hidden clips, let ends run wild, then trim and sand.

## Lumber Selection Guide

Find your row: **Where it goes**

| Where it goes | Your pick | Why |
|---|---|---|
| **Hidden outdoor joists** | Pressure-Treated | 15+ years; ground contact rated |
| **Visible walking surface** | Premium Cedar | 20+ years; naturally resists rot |
| **Interior walls only** | Standard Pine | Budget friendly; decays rapidly outdoors |

## Site & Material Checks

- ◯ Verify level ground across the entire footprint before adding gravel.
- ◯ Match diagonal corner measurements exactly to ensure a perfectly square frame.
- ◯ Sight down every joist edge to mark the natural upward crown.
- ◯ Clear sawdust from side grooves before inserting hidden plastic track clips.
- ◯ Measure distance to the house foundation every five cedar decking boards.

## Project Notes & Measurements

Enjoy those sun-drenched summer afternoons on your beautiful, splinter-free cedar deck!