



Complete Guide To **Deck Styles and Trends**



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Decks Come of Age



An open deck was unusual until the 1950s but once the post WWII housing boom took off, decks and patios became a popular add-on to the ranch houses and colonials that made up suburbia. The backyard, once the sole domain of children and gardens started to take on a more grown-up look and feel.

Today's decks have progressed to be stylish and functional extensions of the home itself. Just browse websites like Houzz and Pinterest and

you'll find thousands of design and decorating ideas for outdoor living with the deck as the central element. Today's homeowners are using this outside space for personalized purposes such as cooking, entertaining, sitting around a fire, relaxing in a hot tub, a children's play area, and meditation.

Scope of Project

Adding a deck will almost always improve a home's curb appeal and add value to the home - as long as it's done right. This is an important caveat because "decks gone wrong" can be a very expensive experiment.

Getting it "done right" generally means hiring a professional contractor to do the work, which, of course, will be more expensive in the short run, but is likely to save you money in the end. Determining how much a new or replacement deck will cost depends on your needs and goals, the space you have to work with, and current condition of the site.

Deck Size

In many new developments, the builder will include a basic 8X10 or 10X10 deck but once the homeowner gets out there with a grill, a patio table, and a few plants, they quickly run out of space. We find that the average family needs a minimum square footage of 12x16, while 12X18 is ideal for the average deck. You can certainly go larger and more elaborate than this, but we wouldn't recommend going any smaller.

Starting Point

What you are starting with will have a big influence on the finished project. Some houses don't have a deck at all, or maybe they have a patio space. Sometimes there is an existing deck but it's in such bad shape that it must be torn off completely and a new one built. In other cases, the foundation of the deck may be solid but the style and condition isn't up to snuff anymore for a variety of reasons.



Before



After

Common Scenarios



Deck is Too Small

In many cases, a home builder will tack on a small deck to a new home. It's not long before things start to feel cramped. If the homeowner wants something more, they need to add it themselves. With the right design, just a few feet more can create a comfortable gathering area for family and friends. In these cases, homeowners can expand the upper section of the deck while still using the original.

Deck Replacement

In some cases, the existing deck just can't be saved. It may have been installed poorly to begin with or it may have just aged out of its useful life. If you have an old, wood deck, the structure may be compromised in some way by rot, splitting or a settling. Many times homeowners don't even want to walk on the deck because it's just not safe anymore. In this case, the only choice is to tear it off and start again.

No Deck or Patio

A homeowner may have no deck and just two to three concrete steps leading down to a sidewalk or concrete patio. Homeowners get tired of constantly have to go up and down the stairs, or they may worry it is a tripping hazard. Building a walk out level deck solves these problems while adding attractive outdoor living space. This solution also makes it easier for small children or people who have hip or knee problems to get around. In many cases, homeowners can avoid ripping out the old steps by building the deck right over the top of them.

Hybrid Deck Replacement

Many times, homeowners have a structurally solid deck attached to their house, with a strong foundation. The floor boards or railing may be in bad shape, or just not in the style or color that they like, but the "bones" of the deck are still good. In these cases, homeowners may be able to save themselves the cost and hassle of replacing the footings and base of the deck by removing the top deck boards and replacing them. The homeowner can leave the base in its original condition or they can wrap the existing posts in the matching material from the upper replacement material.

How far will your budget take you?

In order to give you a starting point on figuring out how far your budget will take you, we've estimated the following price ranges. Keep in mind prices will vary depending on the materials, the complexity of the job and the size of deck. With that in mind, here are some rough estimates assuming an average deck size is 12x14 ft. All prices include labor, materials, all engineering, necessary permits and inspections.

Add new wood deck & rail	\$6,000 - \$ 8,000
Add new no-maintenance deck & aluminum rail	\$9,000 - \$ 11,500
Replace completely - see above pricing with an approximate	\$700-\$1000 <i>removal fee</i>
Hybrid (overlay composite deck application with new aluminum railing)	\$8,000-\$10,000

Deck Styles

Outdoor decks come in a variety of sizes, and the design can be simple or elaborate. You can create simple rectangles, multi-level decks, wraparound decks, ground-level or second story decks. From traditional design to more modern industrial looks, deck design and the amenities associated with deck continue to evolve.

cables. Other finishing touches include balusters, molded end caps, light caps on posts and down the stairs and other decorative accents.

While matching railing to composite decking remains a reliable design option, some homeowners are also enjoying the opportunity to contrast colors or even mix materials to suit their style perfectly.

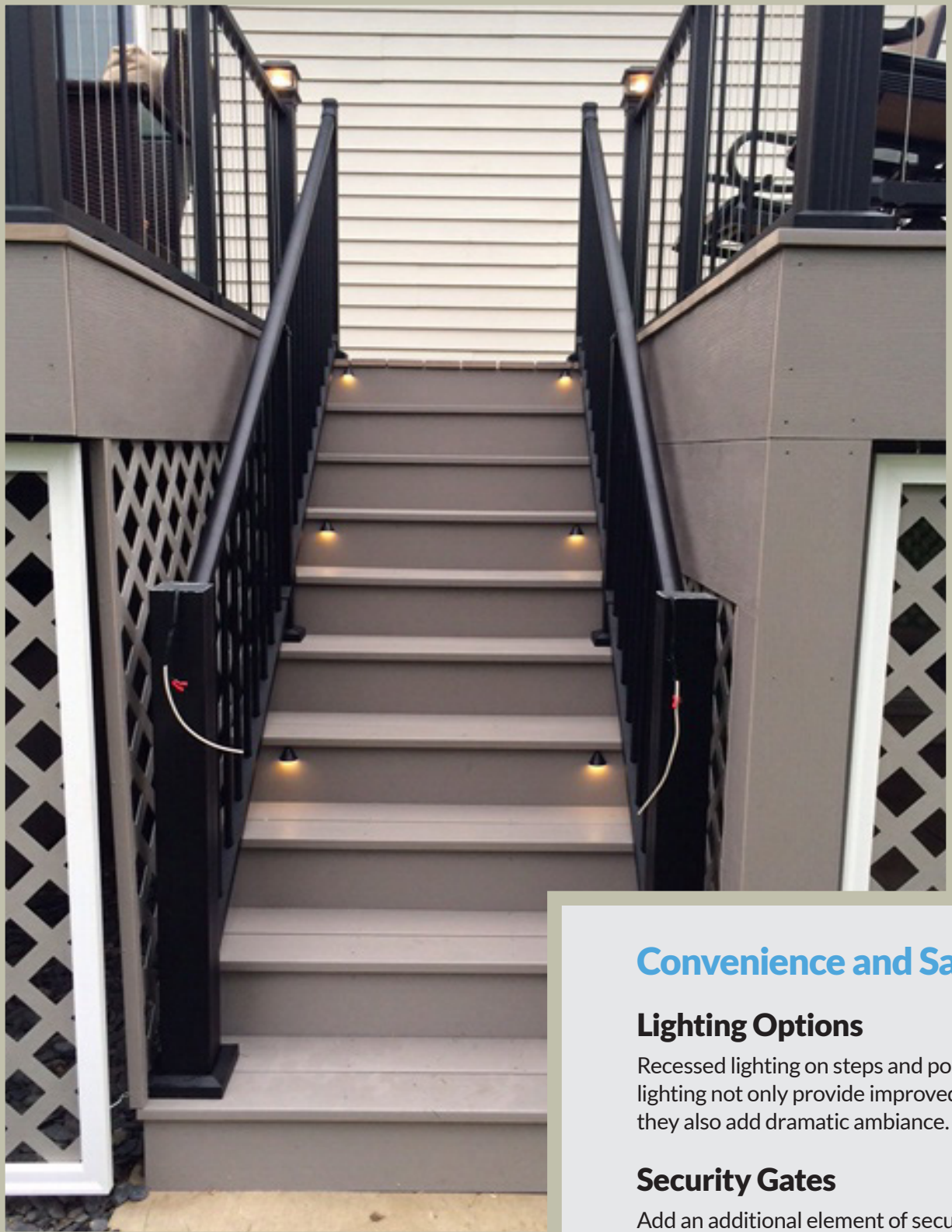
Material Options

Your choice of materials is also expanding. In addition to wood and composite decking, many homeowners are also looking into vinyl or cellular materials for a more modern look and stronger fade warranty.

Deck Railing

Deck railing has come a long way in a few short years. Moving beyond the traditional vertical posts, deck railings now come in intricate patterns, curved wrought iron, and horizontal





Convenience and Safety

Lighting Options

Recessed lighting on steps and post cap lighting not only provide improved safety, they also add dramatic ambiance.

Security Gates

Add an additional element of security without sacrificing aesthetics by installing a security gate. Self-closing hinges and locks make the gate ideal for families with pets and small children.

Pulling it All Together

– Design Experience is Key

The demand for integrating indoor and outdoor living will continue to grow as homeowners learn more about new styles and materials for extending their interior spaces outdoors. Features like integrated benches, shade elements like pergolas and screens, and outdoor kitchens are common.

When first introduced, decks reserved for hanging plants and bird feeders, the occasional sunbather and outdoor grilling but these days your deck can be so much more. Now, the modern “outdoor living room” may contain a hot tub, a gazebo, a pergola, and even a fireplace.

In addition, as an extension of the house, the deck also often replicates interior functions. Your deck designer/builder, while not an architect, should have experience in designing kitchen layout, dining areas, and living areas with traffic patterns and multiple functions in mind.

Build with Add-Ons In Mind

If you plan to stay in your home for the long haul, your ideas may be bigger than your budget. In that case, you’ll want to build your deck in such a way that you can add on the features you want in the years to come, as you can afford them. If you want



to add a hot tub or an above ground pool, or even convert the deck into a three or four season room, your deck should be engineered with these goals in mind.

In particular, if you do want to enclose the deck in the future, your builder must engineer the deck to be capable of holding the weight of a sunroom. The plan should also take into consideration how to incorporate the siding, the roofline, the terrain, the mechanicals of your home and snow load.

The most important aspect of doing a project like this is to work with an experienced, reliable contractor who can advise you special considerations posed by your home, existing impediments or utilities, or how to integrate your new spaces into the style of your existing home. Unless you have considerable experience in managing previous construction projects, you’ll want to stick with a reliable contractor with a solid track record.

Conclusion

As you can see, open air decks come in many different styles, from simple walk-outs to wrap-around decks to multi-level structures. With it, you can express your personal style while connecting your home to your pool or hot tub area, providing dining and entertaining space, or just enjoying a quiet sunset.

A new deck will improve the curb appeal and increase the value of your home but only if it is done right. You'll avoid many problems by stick-

ing with a local contractor who knows the building codes and can provide you with professional design advice and installation, as well as local references and examples of their work. Be sure to ask if your contractor includes a warranty on labor as well as materials.

We hope you found this guide helpful. Enjoy your beautiful new deck!

