Seven Steps to Perfect Paving

Paving can give your yard an instant makeover. It creates areas of interest, texture and definition. But there are a few tricks to know to ensure that your paving job looks top drawer and professional.
If you follow our "Seven Steps" you will be enjoying your new paving in no time.

1. **PLANNING**

Planning and preparation is the key to a professional looking paving job, yet this is where so many people take short cuts.

To avoid unnecessary work and expense, take the time to plan out your job properly from the start.

- Understand the exact dimensions of the paving required.
- Using string or chalk, mark out the area to be paved then transfer the dimensions to your plan.
- Make note of storm water drainage and electrical work that may need to run underneath your paved area, ensuring these go onto your plan as well.
- **To calculate the paving area:**
- Multiply the length of the project by its width.
- Break down irregular shapes into smaller regular shapes, calculating the area for each and adding together for total area to be paved.
- Length x Width = Area

2. ESTIMATING MATERIALS YOU NEED

A solid foundation is critical for smooth stable paving.

- A base layer of road base should be laid across the whole area, to a total depth of between 10 – 15cm for driveways, and 5 – 8cm for pathways.

- **To calculate required road base:**
- For every 10 square metres compacted to a depth of 5cm, 0.6 metres will be required.

- The next layer consists of a 4cm deep layer of washed coarse bedding sand, for every 10 square metres you will need 0.5 cubic metres.
- Finally, fine washed jointing sand is swept into the pavers. For an area of approximately between 20 – 30 square metres, a 20kg bag will be required.

3. PREPARING THE AREA

Again, thorough preparation is key to a great looking job.

- Mark the paving area with 4 stakes and run string lines between them.
- The height of the string should be set at the height of pavers when the job is finished.
- Use a string line level or spirit level to level strings.
- The area of paving should always slope away from buildings to ensure any water will drain away.
- The finished paved height must be below damp proof course.
- Excavate the ground to the required depth. This should be the thickness of the paved area plus 4cm of bedding sand, plus the depth of the road base.
- Make the ground as even as possible.

4. BASE LAYER AND BEDDING SAND

- Evenly spread and compact the road base layer, remembering to regularly compact in 5cm depths to ensure even compaction.
- Check the evenness and depth of the base layer by measuring from the string line.
- Place the screeding rails in position, and spread the moist bedding sand to a depth of 4cm.
- Pull the screeding board over the rails to obtain a level surface.
- Carefully remove the rails and fill in the ruts left by the rails in the sand.
- Move the rails to the next section to be paved.

1. LAYING THE PAVERS

- To determine the average width of the pavers, place 20 tightly together side by side, and then measure the overall width. Divide the total by 20 and add 3mm to this average paver width to allow for gaps.
- Set up a string line where the first paver is to be laid, and measure along the string line the distance you'll be paving using the average width plus a 3mm (gap), then establish two reference pavers.
- Or alternatively, space out a grid of string lines based on the final dimension (average paver width + 3mm) for 20 paver intervals.
- Lay the pavers in your preferred pattern allowing 3mm gaps between each.

- Don’t allow the pavers to touch as this may cause chipping.

6. EDGING

Carefully prepared edging is essential to prevent the movement of the pavers and sand.

- Edging restraints should be approximately 10mm below the uncompacted pavers to allow for final compaction.
- Edging restraints can be made of either treated timber of concrete.

***7*. COMPACTING AND JOINING**

- When you have completed the paving and edging, carefully sweep fine dry joint fill sand over the entire, area, ensuring all gaps are filled.
- For smaller jobs, compact the pavers using a rubber mallet and a hardwood plank.
- For larger jobs you may require a vibrating plate compactor (these are generally available from equipment hire companies).
- Protect pavers from scratching and chipping by using a plywood sheet, old carpet or matting during compacting process.
- Paving should compact about 10mm.
- Top up joints with fill sand if required after compaction.
- Lightly spray with hose to help completely fill the joints.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

- ✓Pavers
- ✓Road Base Paver cutters such as brick saw (hired) or bolster
- ✓Bedding sand rubber mallet
- ✓Fine washed sand
- ✓Cement and sand for edging
- ✓Rake compactor (either hire a vibrating plate compactor or timber and rubber mallet)
- ✓Shovel
- ✓String line
- ✓A piece of old carpet, matting or plywood sheeting for use when compacting
- ✓Stakes
- ✓Timber screeding rails 3m long and 3 to 4cm thick
- ✓Tape measure
- ✓Line level or spirit level
- ✓Flat straight 3 metre length of screeding board or aluminium screed

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