



Ultimate Fencing Guide: Design & Materials

*Your complete resource for selecting the
right fence for your home.*

You know you need a fence, but what type of fence is the best fit for your needs? There are plenty of options, ranging from simple to specialty. It all depends on your personal preferences, functional needs, and location.

In the Ultimate Fencing Guide, our fencing design experts walk you through all the considerations you need to make before building a new fence, including how to determine your fence “priorities,” what functionality you need, and the best materials for the job.

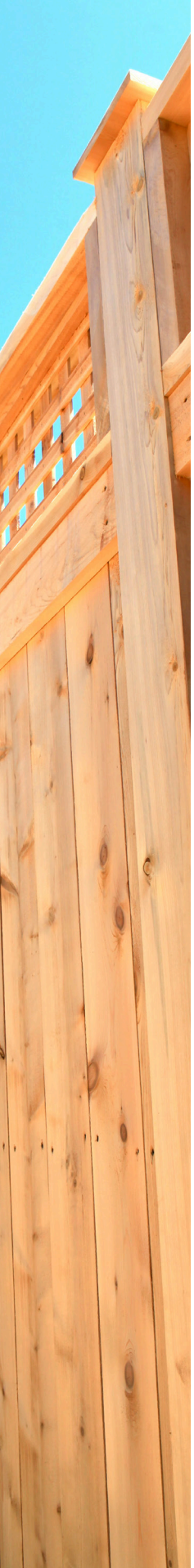
Determine Your Fence Priorities

If your needs are simple, a simple fence will do. An easy and classic fence is a cedar fence board fence, like a dog eared vertical board fence.

As a “functional” fence that keeps critters out and dogs and kids in, a basic vertical board fence is cost-effective, efficient and provides unmatched privacy. It’s also easy on the eyes – available in Redwood and Western Red Cedar. A basic wood slat fence is easy to construct and easy to upkeep.

Weather and Wear

For those who live in extraordinarily sunny areas, or by the coast where salt water permeates the air, vinyl fencing will stand the test of time against the elements. Many vinyl fence manufacturers – including ActiveYards – offer warranties. Vinyl fencing doesn’t attract termites, and has minimal warping, weathering, discoloring, fading, staining and rotting. Your vinyl fence won’t require much in the way of painting, staining or treating, and it will look as good years from now as it does on the day you install it.



Style Preference

While many people go into the fence-building process without much of a clue as to what they actually want, some have a preexisting, grand vision of exactly how they want their fence to look.

If you want a more modern look, horizontal fencing is a great choice. Depending on your needs, you can construct horizontal slats with small gaps (for privacy) or larger gaps (for a view, sunlight and air flow). Horizontal fencing has an unmistakable feeling of modern class and is quickly becoming a popular option for Southern California homeowners.

Security

A good fence will keep the things you want in – and the things you don't out. Of course, the level of security needed for each situation is unique. If you live near a canyon, your yard is exposed to coyotes, rattlesnakes, and even the occasional curious mountain lion. If you live in an area where critters are abundant, you'll want to build a fence that is snug to the ground and tall enough to deter intruders.

Privacy

While you most likely get along with your neighbors, you probably still want a certain level of privacy. As the old saying goes, good fences make good neighbors. When choosing your fence design°, make sure to keep in mind the level of privacy you want – and how that will impact the look and feel.

Maintenance

Some folks love a good project. If performing upkeep on your fence sounds like a great way to spend your Saturday, you're likely not the type of homeowner to be scared off by a little maintenance. However, if you're the type who would rather spend Saturday at the beach, or anywhere else that does not require you to do physical labor, you'll want to choose a low-maintenance material for your fence that will only require maintenance every few years or so.

Choose Your Fence Materials

Once you have an understanding of your fencing priorities, it's time to choose your materials. Popular choices include wood, vinyl, PVC, and aluminum. Each has its benefits, and each can deliver a gorgeous, long-lasting fence for your home.

Wood: Classic, Natural and Affordable

The benefits of a wood fence are undeniable. Wood is sturdy, affordable and versatile. It's also easy on the eyes. There are a variety of woods to choose from: Softwoods, like Redwood and Western Red Cedar, are lightweight yet sturdy, and very affordable. Hardwood fences, like Brazilian Ipe and Mangarais, add a touch of elegance and an incredibly unique look to your fence, sure to be the envy of your neighbors and durable enough to last a lifetime. Wood also offers a variety of shades, since it can be stained to match each homeowner's preferences.

Wood does, however, require ongoing maintenance. Since your fence will be exposed to the elements, wood needs to be stained and sealed every couple of years to keep up its fresh appearance. Depending on where you live (wood tends to deteriorate more quickly in coastal climates due to salt air) wood may require more frequent upkeep. Wood fences are typically more difficult to clean than their vinyl counterparts, as dirt and other substances can penetrate its fibers. Despite the need for minor upkeep, wood is an affordable, effective and gorgeous material for any fence.



Vinyl: Maintenance-free and Built to Last

If you're looking for a set-it and forget-it fencing option, vinyl is for you. Vinyl fencing is quickly gaining in popularity with homeowners. Though it is a more expensive option than wood, vinyl's durability and lack of required maintenance can actually make the total cost of ownership over the fence's lifetime similar to that of a wood fence. Some manufacturers, like Duramax, offer lifetime warranties on their vinyl fences. The only maintenance required for vinyl fencing is a hose. Simply turn your hose on, point and shoot. And unlike wood, which will expand and contract with temperature changes, vinyl stands up to the elements, be they rain, sun, wind or salt air.

While vinyl can't always emulate the same beauty of a wood fence, emerging designs – like DuraGrain – do a great job of recreating the look of traditional wood fencing, without all that pesky maintenance. Vinyl fencing is available in a variety of styles, from the classic white picket to modern horizontal slats.



PVC & Aluminum: Prefab and Low Maintenance

ActiveYards – which offers prefabricated, low maintenance, lifetime warrantied fence systems made in the USA – is also a great material choice for fencing. ActiveYards systems are one of the most innovative, inexpensive and user-friendly fencing options available. Made from PVC and aluminum, ActiveYards fencing offers high-quality materials at a very affordable price.

Best of all – you can easily install the fence yourself. With a simple locking system, the fence parts snap together easily – like Legos for adults. The most difficult part of installing the fence is digging holes for the fence posts and pouring concrete. If you are willing to dig holes, pour concrete, and level your fence posts, you can save thousands on installation. However, if you don't want to get into that level of involvement, ask your lumber yard for a reputable contractor to help with the heavy lifting.



Fence Materials - Get Creative

New materials like vinyl/aluminum combinations aren't the only new players in the fencing revolution. More and more, homeowners are getting creative with their fences. It's not uncommon to see custom fences that combine existing materials and designs to create something entirely new.

Pro Fencing Tips

Split the Cost

Your next-door neighbor will be sharing that big, beautiful new fence with you. Why not work together on the fence and split the costs?

Know the Rules

Always check your local building codes. There may be height restrictions and rules for certain types of fences. Know your HOA's policies – which are often stricter – as well.

Get Inspired

Start looking at fences when you're out and about. You will notice fences you like and fences you don't – and you'll get the creative juices flowing.



At J&W Lumber, we're here to help. Contact us or stop into one of our showrooms and we'll help you find the right materials and plan for your fence.

Contact J&W Lumber Today!

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