

 **BLACK&DECKER®**

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO

# PATIOS & WALKWAYS

Moneysaving Do-it-yourself  
Projects for Improving  
Outdoor Living Space

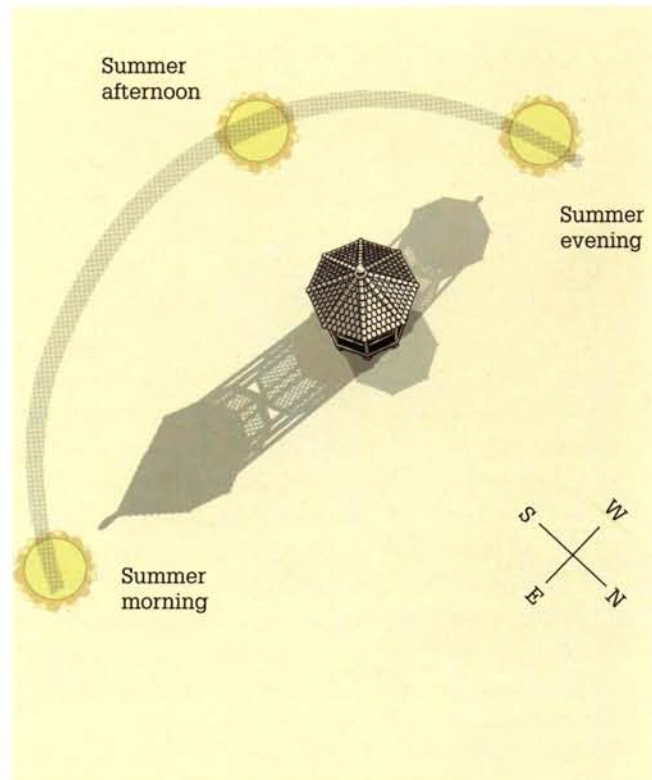


# Climate Control

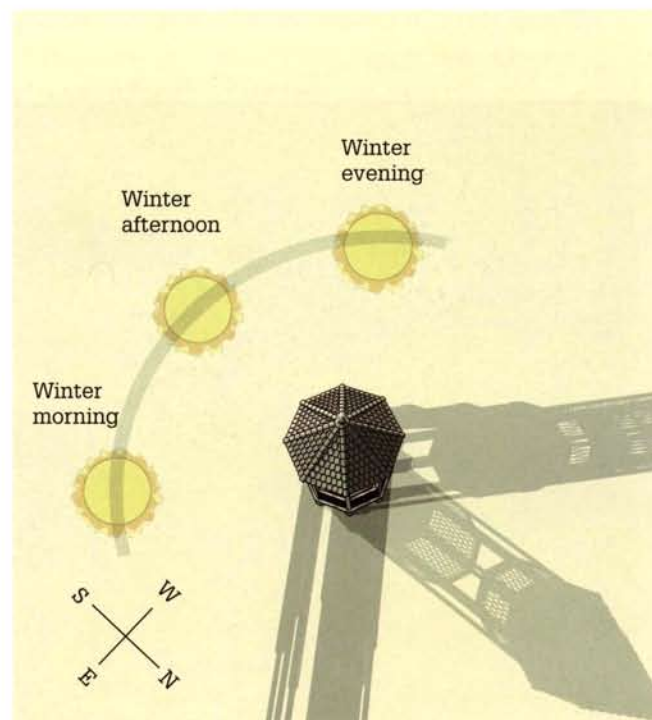
Careful planning can't change the weather, but it can help you make the best of prevailing conditions. By controlling or utilizing sunlight (and shade), wind, and natural air currents, you are in essence creating a microclimate for your patio and can effectively make it the most comfortable place in your outdoor landscape.

## Sunlight & Shadows

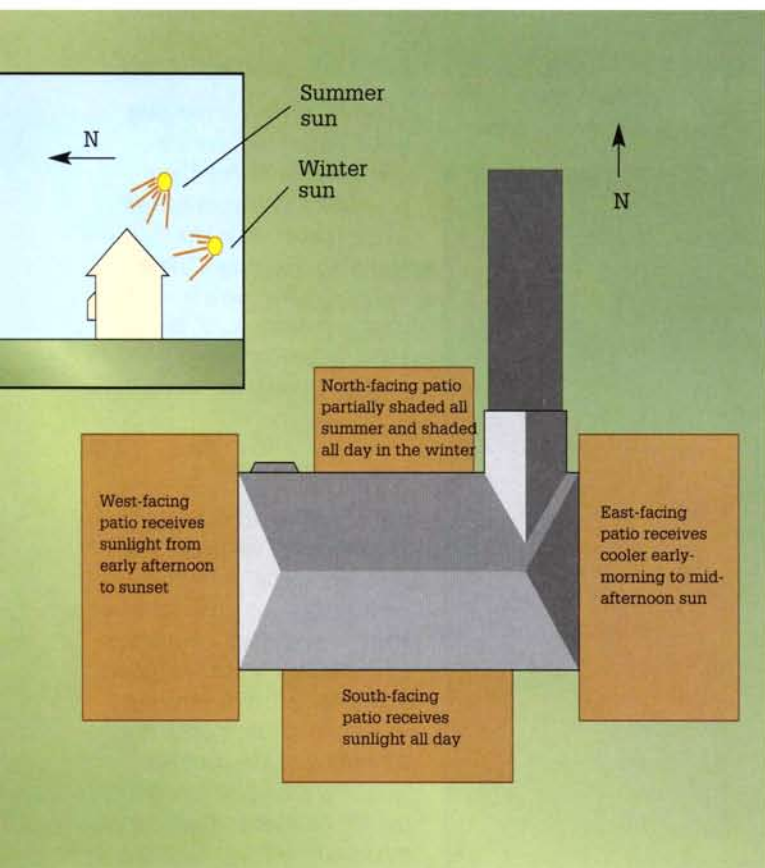
The unalterable pattern of the sun is one of the few climatic systems you can count on. The tricky part is positioning your patio so it receives the right amount and intensity of sunlight at the time of day—and the season—when you'll use it most. The sun's path changes throughout the year. In summer, it rises high in the sky along the east-west axis, creating shorter shadows and more exposure overall. In winter, the sun's angle is relatively low, resulting in long shadows in the northwest, north, and northeast directions. To avoid shadows altogether, you can locate a patio away from the house and other structures.



Shadows follow the east-west axis in the summer.

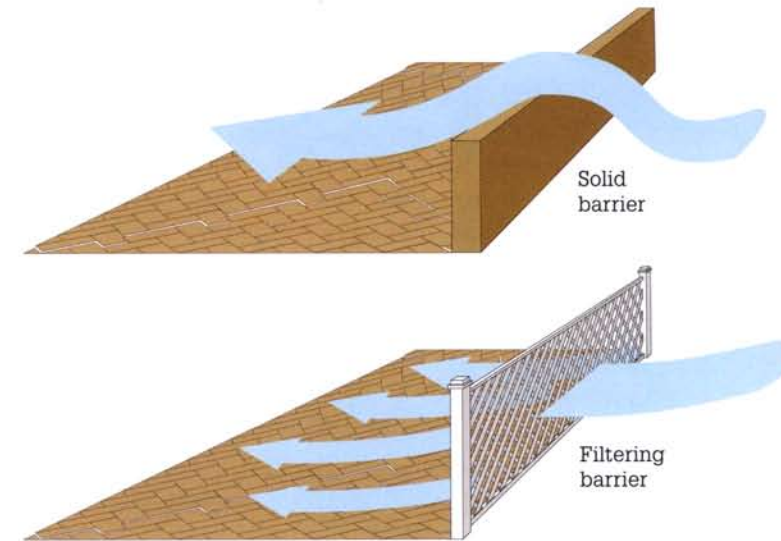


Winter shadows point to the northeast and northwest and are relatively long at midday.



## Wind

Strong wind can ruin your patio peace as surely as a rainstorm. Shielding yourself from wind takes careful planning, and sometimes trial-and-error experimentation. Since you can't protect against all wind, first determine the direction of prevailing winds—the most frequent and strongest wind currents affecting your site (prevailing winds may change with the seasons), then decide on the best location for a wind barrier. Contrary to appearances, a solid barrier often is not the most effective windbreak. This is because the air currents swoop over the top of the barrier and then drop down on the backside, returning to full strength at a distance roughly equal to the barrier's height. A more reliable windbreak is created with a lattice or louvered fence that diffuses and weakens the wind as it passes through the barrier.



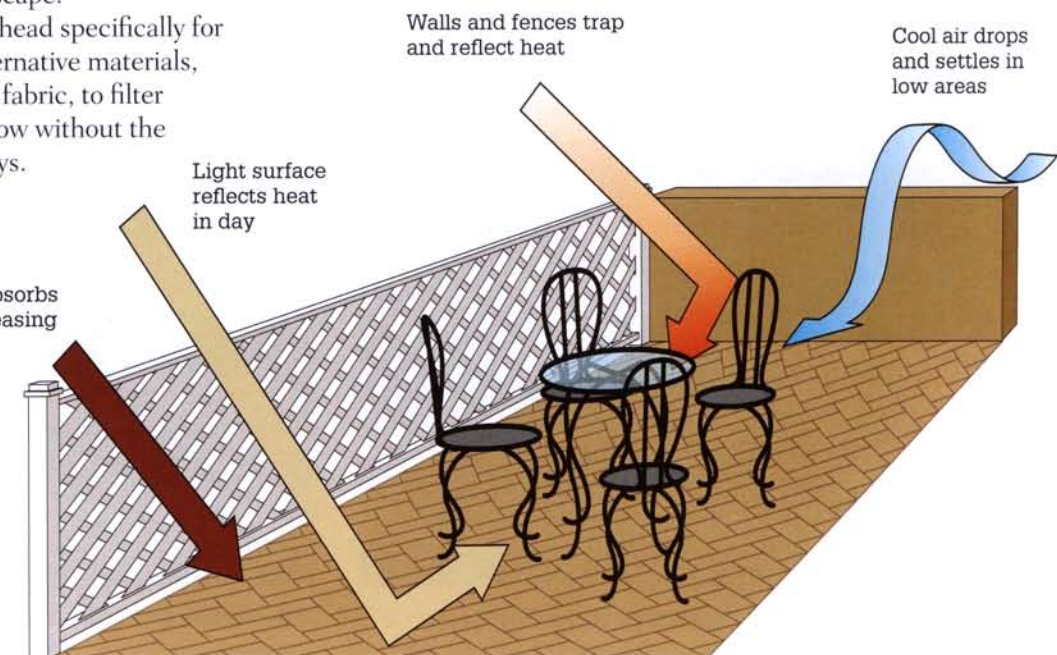
Solid barriers drive wind currents upward, creating a forcible reversal in direction. Filtering barriers allow wind to pass through, reducing its force in the process.

## Patio Materials & Orientation

The surface material you choose can affect the patio's environment. Dark-colored, solid surfaces, like brick or dark stone, absorb a lot of heat during the day and may become uncomfortable to walk on. However, after the sun goes down, stored heat released from the paving can warm the air on the patio. Solid walls also reflect heat and can restrict cooling breezes. Because cold air drops, low-lying patios or those positioned at the base of an incline tend to be cooler than higher areas of the landscape.

If you're building an overhead specifically for shading, experiment with alternative materials, such as bamboo screening or fabric, to filter sunlight for a bright, warm glow without the harshness or heat of direct rays.

Surface materials, barriers, and the patio's elevation within the landscape all have an effect on the space's microclimate.





**To appreciate** the importance of balance in this patio composition, picture it without the potted trees and the boulders along the right side.

# PHILIPSCHMIDT.NET

## Design Principles

Design principles describe different ways of looking at a space. Never hard-and-fast rules, design principles are helpful if they get you to ask questions about your plan. They prompt both creativity and criticism, so you can narrow down the choices and make deliberate style decisions. Here are a few principles to consider:

### Unity & Variety

Unity is making sure every element of a plan is appropriate for the overall scheme. Topping a formal red-brick patio with traditional wrought iron furniture would be part of a unified plan; decorating a rustic patio with ornate classical urns would not. Variety, while not exactly the opposite of unity, is there to remind you to mix it up a little. A patio, walkway, and set of steps all made with the same concrete pavers are certainly unified, but the design would probably look more interesting with a contrasting border or interspersed accent pavers.

### Balance

The purpose of balance is to avoid a lopsided plan in which the eye is always drawn to one element or area. For example, if one side of a patio is dominated by an arbor, you can balance the setting with a

grouping of planters on the opposite side. Because balance in design is purely visual, you don't necessarily have to match elements by size or type. An eye-catching sculpture or a colorful wall can balance a prominent water feature.

### Proportion

To determine proportion, look at the size and overall impact of the space relative to its surroundings. The patio as a whole should fit with the house and yard, but so should its individual elements. A tall, imposing pergola extending well above the house's roofline only makes the house look smaller. Proportion is also about maintaining scale within the space. Placing a modest furniture set amid a vast sea of pavers only emphasizes the lack of enclosure.

### Simplicity

Even professional designers have a hard time reining in their creative urges. Respecting simplicity doesn't mean the design has to be minimal, or even modest. It's more a matter of knowing when to say when. As a rule of thumb, choose your materials and design elements because you really like them and will enjoy being surrounded by them. Just keep in mind that too much decoration or variety results in a complicated design that prevents you from appreciating individual details.