

Privacy Fencing: Choose Your Style and Install



Do you feel like the entire neighborhood watches as you relax in your backyard? To remedy that fishbowl feeling, many homeowners install a privacy fence. Whether wood, vinyl, or metal, a privacy fence keeps prying eyes from keeping tabs on your every move. If that sounds like the solution to your backyard anxiety, we share reasons to install a privacy fence, types to consider, and how to install one on your property.

Reasons to install a privacy fence

Many homeowners want a privacy fence for privacy. But there are a few other reasons for installing one on your property.

- **Security**—A fence keeps kids from cutting through your yard on their way to the park. It also deters those with more unsavory motives from venturing too close for your comfort.
- **Protection**—A privacy fence keeps pets and children where they belong.
- **Camouflage**—Keep your yard neat and tidy when you hide unsightly things behind a fence. With your building supplies, gardening implements, or latest project tucked behind the fence, your neighbors will think you have the neatest yard on the block.
- **Keep the peace**—In his poem “Mending Wall,” Robert Frost says, “Good fences make good neighbors.” Perhaps your neighbors are lovely, but you don’t enjoy gazing at their unkempt space. A privacy fence lets you enjoy your outdoor life without stressing over theirs.

Types of privacy fence

Before investing in anything for your hearth and home, it helps to know your options. Following are five popular types of privacy fences to consider.

Stockade fence

The most popular style of privacy fence is the stockade. It’s constructed of wooden slats, side by side, without gaps, attached to horizontal rails. The slats are either cut straight across the top or pointed like a picket.

You can purchase pre-assembled stockade fence panels in a standard 6x8-foot size. Then, paired with posts and a gate, you can easily install a privacy fence yourself. Typically, stockade fencing comes in wood.

Lock board fence

A lock board fence has tongue and groove boards that fit together to create a panel. However, because the boards lock together, it blocks airflow. So, while gusts of wind may not blow your patio furniture across the deck, gentle breezes won’t get through, either. If lack of airflow is a concern, consider a lock board style with 2 feet of lattice at the top. The lock board fence comes in wood or vinyl.

Shadowbox fence

Shadowbox fence panels have alternating boards on the opposite sides of the rails, so the fence looks the same on both sides. Although the boards are closely spaced, the air can pass through, unlike in the lock board style fence. Typically, shadowbox fence is built with wood but also comes in vinyl panels 6 feet wide.

Board on board

While board on board has a similar appearance as a shadow box fence, there are a few differences. First, board on board has alternating boards, but they're attached to the same side of the rails and overlap at the edges. This style affords better privacy since there are no gaps. But it also blocks any airflow.

Chain link fence

Typically, a chain link fence is constructed of galvanized wires woven together in a zig-zag pattern to create a fabric with wide open spaces. But to provide privacy, some homeowners opt for chainlink with vinyl slats woven thru the openings. This option gives you the sturdiness of the chainlink with the privacy provided by the slats.

Decorative fence

Whether you choose wood or vinyl, you can dress up most fence styles for a more personal look. For example, you can add decorative caps on the posts, a lattice layer across the top, or ornamental rails on both wood and vinyl. Also, vinyl comes in many color options, including two-tone color palettes. And wood comes in different species and can be painted or stained in any color you choose. In addition, decorative hardware, gates, and lighting can make your privacy fence the envy of the neighborhood.



How to install a privacy fence

Installing a panel fence is the quickest way to create your private backyard oasis. No matter what style or material you use, a fence made of pre-assembled panels has half the work done for you. So, let's look at the basic steps to build your privacy fence in a weekend.

1. Make a plan

Every fence project requires careful planning for a successful outcome. To ensure you don't run into a snag, follow these steps.

- **Measure**—Once your style is picked out, you'll need to know how much material to buy. Measure the perimeter to get the linear footage and divide that by the panel length. The resulting number is how many panels you need, plus a partial panel for any overage. You'll need two more posts than panels.
- **Do the legwork**—With your fence style and location in mind, you need to check in with a few people. First, always let your neighbors know your intentions. Next, call 811 to make sure you're not planning to dig where underground utilities are located. Then, check with your local officials and homeowners' association for permits or permissions.
- **Mark the ground**—Use string tied to stakes to lay out the perimeter of your fence and spray paint to mark the location of the posts and gates.

2. Dig post holes

Use a post-hole digger to dig the holes deep enough that $\frac{1}{3}$ of the post is in the ground with an extra 4-6 inches. Fill the extra depth with gravel for drainage.

3. Set the posts

Tamp the gravel and position the post in the center of the hole. Pour in fast-setting concrete mix and fill with water per the manufacturer's directions. Brace the posts with 2x4s, ensuring they're plumb. Allow the concrete to set before proceeding.

4. Attach the panels

Use blocking to help place the fence panel between the posts and raise it to the correct height. Then, use an impact driver to drive four screws through the panel into each post.

5. Attach post caps

Nothing gives a fence a finished look like post caps. So now's the time to install and secure them with a finish nailer. When done, remove all stakes, braces, and string.

6. Treat the wood

Finally, stain, paint, or treat the wood to complement your home.

Build your secluded dream backyard living space and heighten your security. Build a privacy fence with all the supplies in our latest fencing and gate catalog.