

Patio Perfect

Now that warmer weather its here, it's time to get outside and get your patio ready for morning coffee, solo time with a book or a big dinner with friends and family. Keep reading for more tips on creating the perfect outdoor space to fit your needs and your budget.

Furniture

After a long winter outdoors, you may need to freshen up your furniture a bit. First, try cleaning it. Try a mix of 2 cups of white vinegar to 2 tablespoons of dish soap. Spot test it first to make sure the solution doesn't ruin any fabrics or finishes. If you're good to go, work it into the hard surfaces with a stiff-bristled brush and rinse well. You can also use this solution on cushions and umbrellas (again, spot test first) with a softer brush. If a good wash doesn't work, maybe it's time for a fresh coat of paint. Take your cleaned furniture to an open, well-ventilated space and opt for an outdoor spray paint that's appropriate to your furniture's material. If you're painting metal furniture, look for a paint that inhibits rust. For plastic, make sure the paint you pick will adhere to plastics. While matte finishes are in, glossy finishes are easier to clean. Your local home store offers a variety of paints, colors and finishes to choose from.

Made in the Shade

Throw the best kind of shade — the kind you can sip a lovely beverage under. Look beyond the umbrella at sunsails, awnings, canopies and more. Some more complex installs, like a retractable awning, may require professional installation. But there are easier solutions you can do yourself, like a sail or a canopy. Just make sure your shady solution is securely fastened so it doesn't blow away in a summer storm.

Pick a Peck of Pots

Get creative with containers, textures and blooms in your patio space. Choose plants with leaves and blooms that complement the colors of your furniture and cushions. If your thumb is a lighter shade of green, ask the pros at your garden center to help you pick easy-care plants that can stand up to the weather in your area.





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