

Fire Pit

NOTE: It is important to allow your fire pit to cure for at least 30 days before building a fire in it. Heat can cause concrete with a high moisture content to greatly expand and contract, causing the material to severely crack or fragment.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Hammer or hand maul
- Tape measure
- Shovel
- Hand tamp
- Wheelbarrow or mixing box
- Mason's trowel
- Spray bottle
- Jointing tool
- Square-end trowel
- Tuck-point trowel
- Circular saw with an abrasive masonry blade
- Eye & ear protection
- Wire brush
- 2 × 2 wooden stakes (2)
- Mason's string
- Spray paint
- Compactible gravel
- 60-lb. concrete (12)
- Sheet plastic
- 6" manhole blocks
- ¾" wood spacers (3)
- Chalk
- Refractory mortar
- Surface-bonding cement
- Mortar tinting agent
- ½" plywood
- 8 × 16" landscape pavers (10)

HOW TO BUILD A FIRE PIT

Step A: Excavate the Site

1. Use a hammer or a hand maul to drive a wooden stake into the centerpoint of the planned fire pit location. Then drive a temporary stake into the ground 10½" from the center stake.

2. Tie a mason's string to the center stake—the string should be just long enough to reach the temporary stake. Hold or tie a can of spray paint to the end of the string. Pull the string taut and spray paint a circle on the ground.

3. Remove the temporary stake and drive it into the ground 22½" from the center stake. Pull the string taut, and spray a second circle on the ground.

4. Strip away the grass between the two circles and dig a trench 10" deep.

5. Fill the base of the trench with 2" of compactible gravel. Tamp the gravel thoroughly.

Step B: Pour the Footing

1. Mix concrete in a wheelbarrow or mixing box and shovel it into the trench until the concrete reaches ground level. Work the concrete with a shovel to remove any air pockets.

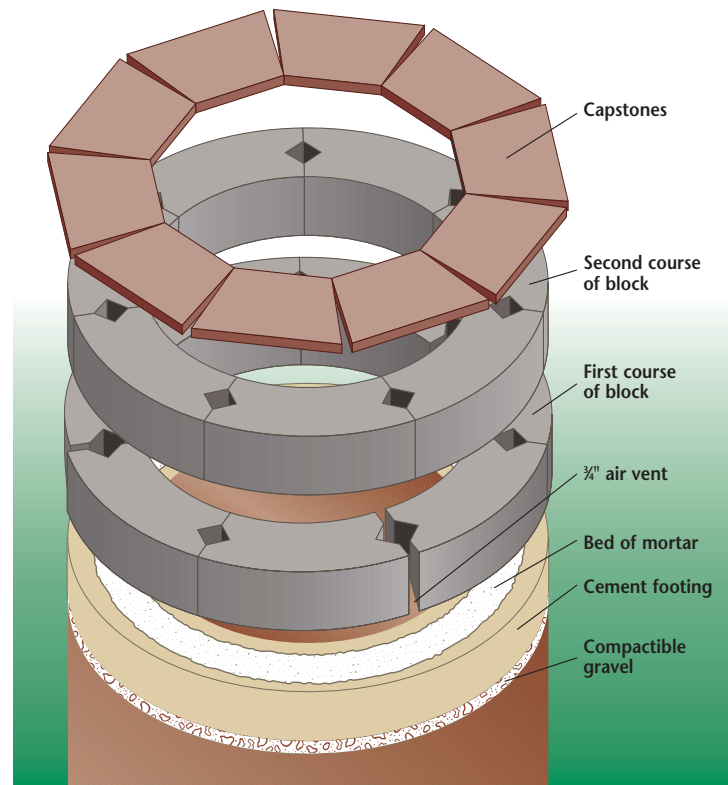
2. Screed the surface of the concrete by dragging a short 2 × 4 along the top of the natural form. Add concrete to any low areas and screed the surface again. Finish the concrete with a trowel.

3. When the concrete is hard to the touch, cover it with a sheet of plastic and let it cure for 2 to 3 days. Remove the plastic and let the concrete cure for an additional week.

Step C: Lay the First Course

1. When the concrete has sufficiently cured, lay out the first course of 6" manhole blocks with three ¾" gaps for air vents, using ¾" wood spacers.

2. Mark the internal and external circumference of the first course on the footing with chalk, and remove the blocks. Take



A. Outline the location of the footing using spray paint and a piece of string. Then dig a circular trench 10" deep.