

# Fence Me In: Ideas for Defining Your Outdoor Space

Good fences make good neighbours – and the right fence can really make your yard. These steps can help you find a style that works for your space.

## Step 1: Determine your needs

First, figure out the purpose of your fence. Do you want it to provide privacy? Beautify your yard? Keep kids or pets in? Comply with pool safety standards? Define your property lines? Add to the value of your home? Determining your needs can help you choose the right fence for you.

## Step 2: Choose your style

- Private. A solid-board fence blocks an unattractive view completely, but it also cuts out light and breezes and can make you feel boxed in.
- Semi-private. This style, which can have subtle spacing, louvers or lattice to let in light, is friendly, comfortable, and makes your yard feel bigger.
- Open. Great if you want to enclose your property but don't want to block it off visually.



## Step 3: Select your material

Your options are limited only by your imagination and, of course, your budget.

**Chain-link.** Definitely the most cost-effective choice, but not necessarily the most aesthetically pleasing. It's good for defining boundaries, keeping kids and pets in, and maintaining a sense of openness. If you've got a big yard and a small budget, this is the way to go.

**Wood.** Styles range from split rail and picket fences to board-on-board styles that look great on both sides and offer privacy, yet let in air and light. The downside to wood? It needs regular maintenance to look good over time.

**PVC/vinyl.** Vinyl fencing looks just like painted wood, but you'll never need to paint it – all you have to do is clean it once a year.

**Iron, aluminum or steel.** Use it if you want an open, formal look. Aluminum, which looks like wrought iron but is less expensive, is the most budget-friendly choice. If cost isn't an issue, custom ironwork is an excellent way to incorporate a fence or gate that's completely unique.

**Natural "fencing."** Hedges and shrubs reduce noise and dust better than a fence, are less expensive, and look lush and beautiful. You'll just have to be patient while your "fence" grows in.

A great-looking fence adds tremendous value to your home – whether it's resale value or your own enjoyment of it over the years. Think carefully about your needs and your personal style, then go ahead and build a fence you'll love.

**Be nice to your neighbours.**

Talk to them before you do anything. Choose a design that looks good from both sides, and make sure you know exactly where your property lines are.

**Think outside the box.**

You may not need to surround your whole yard to get the privacy you want. Consider using a fence to screen in a sitting area or create an outdoor room.

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