Hardscapes Aren’t Really So Hard

Designing with old and new hard materials to create beautiful, functional and lasting patios, walks and walls
HARDSCAPING BASICS:
Flatwork and Walls have similar components

- **Compacted sub-base. Proctor Density**
- **Footing—concrete v. compacted**
- **Setting Bed—mortar or sand**
- **Veneer materials**
- **Cap for wall, edge course for flatwork**
- **Drainage—1/8” per foot min, french drain and weep holes for walls**
Off white board
Hard Materials

- **Natural**: Fieldstone, flagstone, aggregate, river slicks, etc
- **Manmade**: Brick, concrete, tile, etc
- Mortared vs dry laid
Thermal bluestone flagstone treads, fieldstone riser and wall veneer
Fieldstone used as wall boulders and fireplace veneer, flagstone patio dry laid with crushed slate joints
Integral color concrete patio
Poured in place integral color concrete steps, walls and patio
Brick paver patio on compacted crusher run base and mortared brick veneer on grill station. Blue stone cap and adjacent patio set with mortar.
DESIGNING WITH HARDSCAPES

- “Blending” vs “Matching”
- Everything is a room or hallway
- Outdoor rooms: floors, walls, ceilings
- Creativity and beauty by using a few materials in new ways
A range of colors in the pavers makes it easier to blend with surrounding materials.
Outdoor rooms have floors, walls and ceilings.
Use changes in material to differentiate outdoor rooms.
Everything is a "room" or "hallway"
Avoid the ‘concrete doughnut’ pool deck by designing rooms as dominate hardscape connected by walkways.
PA bluestone 4 ways: You don’t have to change materials to get creative
“It's not about using a thousand unique materials, but instead it's about using a few materials thousands of unique ways”
TIPS AND TRICKS

• If sub-base compaction is suspect consider mortarless or dry laid solutions

• Avoid single steps and provide adequate lighting

• Don’t hide the bling

• Consider limiting wall heights less the 30” to open view and avoid guardrails
Track skid steer loaders can backfill areas for planting but typically don’t have enough weight per square inch to properly compact areas for mortared hardscapes.
Off white board
When in doubt, keep it simple
Avoid single steps. This set of tiered steps makes it easier to notice elevation change.
For safety use appropriate lighting
Don’t hide the bling: In a short time the boxwood hedge will completely hide the stone base
Low retaining walls preserve views
Pa bluestone holds up better over time when it's at least 1” thick.
Cut PA bluestone does not have true perpendicular corners so make sure to “pop” a chalkline and saw cut to true them up before mortaring joints.
The thermal edge bluestone has a consistent color and thickness but the regular cut bluestone is more variable, usually thinner and may not be appropriate for step treads.
During
Grassy hillside replaced with low boulder walls, crab slab steps and paver landing preserving views, improving access and adding beauty. And it’s all dry laid without mortar so the hill settles the segmented hardscapes with absorb the change without cracking.
NEWISH PRODUCTS

• Polymeric sand for wider joints
• Porcelain tile pavers
• LED strip lights
Polymeric sand comes in formulas for use in wider joints.
Porcelain pavers on compacted base
Eric King, PLA
King Landscaping
EricKingLandscaping.com