The ultimate Fire Pit guide

Create Family Friendly Fire Pits for Year Round Entertaining

Everything you need to know about fire pits

BONUS

8 STEP INSTALLATION GUIDE INCLUDED!

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Welcome to the outdoor room

Fire Pits are one of the best DIY projects to enhance your outdoor area. When done right, Fire Pits bring family and friends together to create an instant feature bringing both light and heat to your yard meaning it can now be used for year-round entertaining.

Fire Pits come in many shapes and sizes and they are not all created equal. If you're looking to entertain and have children or pets, the best option is a Family Friendly Fire Pit created with concrete fire pit barrier blocks.

Family Friendly Fire Pits look great and provide extra comfort and peace of mind by creating an attractive barrier around the fire, keeping flames out of reach of children and pets. This guide contains everything you need to know about fire pit safety, styles, prices and instructions on how to create a Family Friendly Fire Pit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Unlock the potential of your yard	4
Benefits of fire pits	5
Fire pit considerations	6
Styles and pit inserts	11
Products for fire pits	12
Build a fire pit D.I.Y. guide	14

Jason's top 5 for fire pits!

1. Safety first – install properly, always supervise and have a bucket of water / sand close by.
2. Extend your homes living areas. An outdoor fire pit immediately creates a new hub for your home.
3. Choose a pit enclosed by garden blocks if you've got pets or young kids, they're extra safe – **see page 7.**
4. Location, Location, Location – this is one of the key considerations when choosing. **See all things to consider on page 6.**
5. If you're on a tight budget, try using garden wall blocks for your fire pit because they can double as informal seating, saving you money on extra furniture!

Unlocking the potential of your yard

Australia is blessed with a comfortable year-round climate that we're lucky to enjoy. While that is true, staying warm and cosy during cold winter nights is often only possible when we are confined indoors, rugged up with multiple layers and electric heaters on high. At least that was the case before fire pits became fashionable, affordable and practical for installation at your place!

Adbri Masonry Brand Ambassador and DIY Landscaping Expert Jason Hodges has long been a fan of fire pits, designing them in many of his feature works including his award-winning garden at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show. "Fire pits are natures TV, they stimulate all of our senses, provide families with a central gathering place that will become a feature of the yard and a place where countless memories are made" explains Jason.

There are many benefits to creating a feature fire pit in your garden but if you're like most homeowners, you'll be most attracted to the big-ticket benefits!

Benefits of Family Friendly Fire Pits

- ✓ Extend your living area
- ✓ Keep children and pets away from flames for peace of mind
- ✓ Becomes the immediate focal point of your yard (creates something from nothing)
- ✓ Creates an incredible atmosphere at your house
- ✓ Practical, low cost and easy to install
- ✓ Provides warmth and light allowing you to entertain year round, day and night!

Fire pit considerations

Family Situation

If you have young children or pets, or are likely to entertain with kids around, it is strongly recommended that you choose a Family Friendly Fire Pit. This style involves the use of concrete blocks to create a barrier between the hot flame and you're loved ones.

Budget

The range of available fire pits continues to grow each winter. The Aussie way of enjoying our outdoors has driven suppliers to create products that will allow us to enjoy our outdoor rooms throughout winter, providing style, light and warmth.

Low end $65–$200

These are generally smaller metal fire pits which are wood fuelled. Mostly, these will be great for one winter.

Family Friendly (mid range) $200–$500

At this price point, you can also create small concrete block fire circles. At this price for the block fire pits, this will be a wood fuelled fire in the centre of the block enclosure (keeping 500mm distance from flames).

Family Friendly Fire Pits are in the mid-range and require both a steel pit as well as the decorative fire pit barrier blocks. The best barrier blocks are concrete blocks that can be DIY stacked together and there are great options at landscape yards which have the Miniwall block. While these systems cost a little more, they do provide more peace of mind for families.

Premium $500–850+

There is an increasing number of options in this category and at this price point (and significantly more) you are installing designer outdoor fire pits, stylish fire tables or well designed, built out concrete block fire pits.

In this top tier of products, fire pits are wood fuelled or in the ultra premium section, bio-ethanol fire pits.

Safety - Pit Design

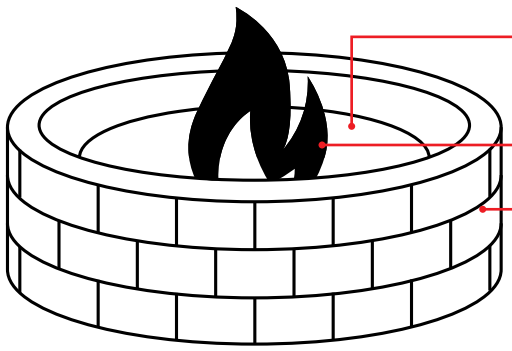
When installed correctly and used responsibly, fire pits are safe and enjoyable. Of course, as with any fire, it is important to follow safety best practice. In addition to the below safety tips, always check for local council fire bans and play by the rules.

For the best balance of safety and a real fire feel, build a Family Friendly Fire Pit with concrete barrier blocks around a steel fire dish. This style has become very popular as the barrier blocks are now available in decorative coloured finishes so they look great while keeping loved ones a safe distance from the flames.

Recommendation: If you have young children and/or pets, choose a Family Friendly Fire Pit – you'll spend more time enjoying it than worrying with the extra layer of protection (the barrier blocks). Obviously, fire has the potential to be dangerous in all instances – enjoy safely.

Best Safety Tips

1. Choose a Family Friendly Fire Pit with Adbri concrete barrier blocks like Windsor™ Stone or Miniwall
2. Install a safe distance from your house, overhanging trees and flammable furniture
3. Always have a full bucket of sand and a bucket of water near to the fire to extinguish at short notice.
4. Never leave fire unattended and always supervise children and pets when using the fire pit.
5. If your fire becomes too smokey and it is uncomfortable, put it out!



Note: Use a steel fire dish or ensure a minimum of 500mm space between flame and barrier blocks

Style and Ambience

The type of fire pit you choose will be determined by your desired look and your family use – those with young children will want a family friendly fire pit. You'll want something that is going to; complement your house, be visually pleasing and that will fit nicely in the area you have allocated. When considering style and the ambiance you want to create, ask these 4 key questions;

1. Do I need a Family Friendly Fire Pit with decorative barrier blocks around the outside?.
2. What will I mainly be using the fire pit for? Will it be intimate couples nights in, entertaining, friends, cooking, family fun (marshmallows etc).
3. What style will work best in my current garden? It is important to choose a solution that will be ready to work in your existing space. Is it a coloured concrete block to complement the garden beds or a small metal pit that will fit in the area?
4. If the fire pit is designed as an entertainer, what other items are needed to set it off? This would include furniture and lighting.

MONEY SMART TIP
If you are building a fire pit from garden retaining wall blocks, these can be capped and double as seating.

Location

Location is the starting point for a fire pit project plan because it is important to understand exactly where in your garden the fire pit will be installed.

Once you know the location and available space, you can start considering size, style and how to accessorise around your fire pit with furniture.

Jason's tips on location

1. Always try to leave at least 2.5 metres from windows and doors to the fire pit flame to ensure those enjoying time indoors don't experience the smoky smell.
2. Don't place fire pit directly atop of timber decks and don't install under trees with overhanging branches

Installation

You can learn how to install a garden block fire on **pages 11–12** but before you get to physically start laying the blocks, you need to consider the foundation – what will you put the blocks on?

If you're going to place directly on top of a timber deck, you'll need to choose a suitable fire pit that is elevated off the ground to avoid damage (or worse) to your deck. Placing onto turf is a possibility, though this patch of your turf will discolour. You can choose to "dig out" some of the turf and bring in some pebbles or decorative aggregates as a pad to put your fire pit on.

HOT TIP

The other option is to create a good looking, solid, flat and non-flammbale base for your fire pit. The easiest way to do this is to install a small pad of concrete pavers. For most fire pits, 1.2m x 1.2m will be more than enough, this can be achieved using 9 Adbri Quadro™ pavers.

Of course, if your fire pit is part of a bigger backyard improvement / home entertaining project, you can create a larger paved feature courtyard area.

Styles and pit inserts

Metal fire dish

Family Friendly Fire pit - Circle

Family Friendly Fire pit - Square

Bioethanol Fire Table

Products for Family Friendly Fire Pits

Miniwall®

Windsor™ Stone

Versawall®

Versastone®

How to build a DIY fire pit with Adbri Masonry blocks

Follow these simple step by step instructions to create a new feature fire pit in your yard.

STEP 1

Mark out the area

Locate an area for your fire pit.

Consider windows / doors to the home as you don't want them too close and the house smoky.

STEP 2

Dig out the area

Once you've selected an area, you are ready to prepare the foundation. If you have an existing paved area, you can go directly on top of this. If you have grass, you can remove the turf and build it onto the dirt. If you want to create a nice level base, you can drop down some pavers first.

STEP 3

Prepare the base

Use a mortar mix of 6 parts sand 1 part dry cement and take time to ensure your foundation is level.

STEP 4

Start laying blocks

Once you've prepared your base, start laying the blocks.

Once the first course is completed, use a brush to sweep off the tops of the blocks from dirt and debris from the tops of the blocks – this will ensure it is nice and flat for the second course.

STEP 5

Lay more courses

To start laying the second course, apply a line of landscape grade adhesive underneath each block (front and back) and place it on top of the course below.

Remember, you need to install in a "brick bond" pattern so the block above sits on the join of the two blocks below (as pictured)

STEP 6

Finishing the block enclosure

Using mortar, stick down the final course of blocks.

Allow some time to dry and brush off the tops of each block.

STEP 7

Bring in the metal fire pit

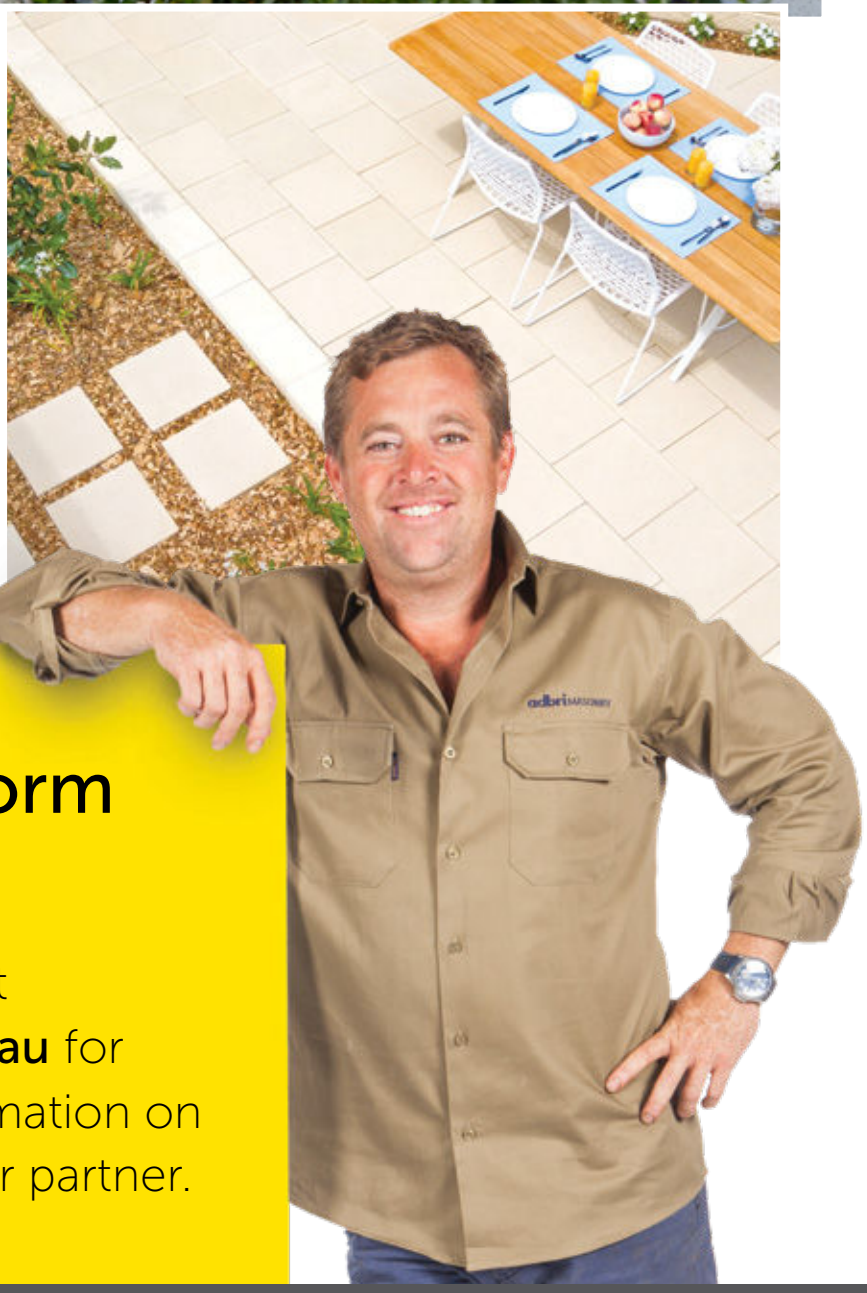
The blocks are done and it's time for the final piece, the steel fire pit itself!

Place in the centre of the blocks and for extra decorating, spread decorative stones or pebbles on the base of the fire pit - it looks great!

STEP 8

Finish off

When you've reached desired height (usually 2-4 courses) you're ready to bring in the finishing touches. For a nicer look, sprinkle some gravel or decorative stone within the circle and then place your steel fire pit in the centre. Then, grab some kindling, wood, marshmallows and the family and you're ready to enjoy your first fire pit.



Ready to transform your backyard?

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