

Tips for Creating Your Dream Space by Sara Shragal

Tips for Protecting your Outdoor Furniture

Imagine a warm breeze on your face as you savor a meal al fresco and watch the sun setting on the horizon. Now picture this experience at your own home.

Who hasn't dreamt about taking their backyard to the next level? Whether it's by adding patios, pergolas, fire pits, outdoor kitchens or other exterior luxuries to their property, now, perhaps more than ever, homeowners are moving into the great outdoors,

The one drawback to investing in outdoor kitchens and those exterior luxuries is you have to protect them from the elements. While that's a concern, you shouldn't let that stop you from setting up your outdoor domicile.

Weather or Not

Don't listen to all those horror stories about outdoor furniture turning into a corroded mess within a matter of months. Upkeep for the outdoors can be simpler than you think.

Some quick weather-related pointers to get you started:

- Metal furniture requires the least maintenance.
- In coastal areas, stay away from wrought iron, which will rust. Instead, choose aluminum. (The same goes for stainless-steel grills, which will corrode if exposed to the salty air.)
- Furniture with sling covers can dry on their own in under a half hour after getting wet, as opposed to cushions, which need more time to be hung and completely dried.
- Stock up on covers for the months when you're not using your furniture.
- Wood patio furniture will naturally weather and gray, much like an untreated deck, if you do nothing to it. Opting to keep it looking closer to the way it was when you first brought it home? Buy sealant and cleaner for your furniture and reseal every year.
- Considering a big, beautiful umbrella for your patio table? Look for models that allow you to easily remove the top portion before wind or rain. If you don't put your umbrella away before bad weather, the winds can whip it around, resulting in damage not just to your umbrella, but also to your tabletop.

Of course, if preservation of your outdoor furniture is your top priority, then the best defense is a good offense. In other words, make your outdoor furniture selections with the elements in mind.

For example, wicker is one of the more popular styles of outdoor furniture out there. But natural wicker requires some special treatment. It needs to be kept in either the shelter of

a covered porch or in your four-season room as it cannot be exposed to the elements. Does that mean you shouldn't buy wicker for your outdoor area? Not exactly.

Man-made wicker, made of PVC and resin, has amazing UV and weather-resistance and can be utilized outdoors. Best of all, it still has the classic woven look of traditional wicker.

So you see, creating an outdoor oasis that holds up to the elements is a very attainable goal. And now that you're a master of the great outdoors (or maybe just the pro of your patio), it's time to select the perfect furniture for your outdoor living area.

Sara Shragal is a staff writer for DirectBuy. For more information or other helpful tips for your home, or to submit a question, please visit www.directbuycares.com or write us at questions@directbuycares.com.