

Beginner's Guide to Planning a Garden Makeover

A garden makeover does not need to start with expensive purchases or big design decisions. The best results usually come from stepping back first, understanding what the space needs to do, and then building a clear plan.

1. Start with how you want to use the space

Before choosing paving, plants, or furniture, think about the main purpose of your garden. For example:

- relaxing and entertaining
- safe play space for children
- outdoor dining
- growing flowers, shrubs, or vegetables
- creating a low-maintenance garden
- improving kerb appeal and property value

Most gardens need to do more than one job, so it helps to prioritise what matters most.

2. Assess the garden you already have

Take note of:

- garden size and shape
- sunny and shaded areas
- slopes or uneven ground
- drainage issues or standing water
- privacy and overlooked areas
- existing paths, fences, patios, and trees
- access for materials and contractors

This gives you a more realistic starting point and helps avoid costly mistakes later.

3. Set a practical budget

Garden projects can range from small upgrades to major landscaping works. Split your budget into categories such as:

- groundworks
- paving or decking
- fencing or screening
- turf or artificial grass
- planting
- lighting
- furniture and finishing touches

Keep a contingency in reserve in case site conditions throw up surprises. Gardens love surprises. Usually the expensive kind.

4. Plan the layout before choosing finishes

Think in zones. A typical garden may include:

- seating area
- lawn or open space
- planting borders
- pathway or access route



- storage area
- feature area such as pergola, fire pit, or raised beds

A clear layout often matters more than the individual products used.

5. Choose materials that suit the property and lifestyle

When selecting materials, consider:

- maintenance levels
- weather resistance
- slip resistance
- cost
- colour and appearance
- suitability for family use or pets

Popular choices include paving, gravel, decking, porcelain, natural stone, sleepers, and lawned areas.

6. Think about planting early

Plants should not be treated as an afterthought. Consider:

- evergreen structure
- seasonal colour
- privacy planting
- pollinator-friendly choices
- low-maintenance options

Even a modern hard-landscaped garden benefits from softening with planting.

7. Get the order of work right

A typical sequence may be:

1. clear and prepare the site
2. complete drainage and groundworks
3. install hard landscaping such as patios, walls, and paths
4. fit fencing or screening
5. add soil preparation and planting
6. finish with lighting, furniture, and accessories
- 7.

8. Keep future maintenance in mind

A garden that looks great on day one but becomes hard work every weekend can quickly lose its appeal. Be realistic about how much upkeep you actually want.

Final thought

A successful garden makeover is not just about making the space look better. It is about making it work better for your home, budget, and lifestyle. Start with a plan, make decisions in the right order, and focus on long-term value rather than impulse buys.

