



# LANDSCAPE LIFESTYLES

Tips & Tools For Landscape Professionals

Issue 12

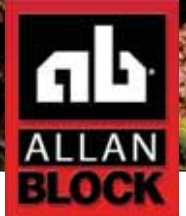


## Inside:

- ◆ Old and New Come Together
- ◆ Building Gravity Walls with Allan Block<sup>®</sup>
- ◆ Visit [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com)

# Old and New Come Together with Style

Ashlar  
Collection



Mario Iantosca is old school. He learned his trade from his father in Naples Italy, where stonemasons have practiced their trade for thousands of years. When Mario immigrated to the Boston area, he carried on the family tradition. He began



installing brick, block and stone the old fashioned way, with mortar and footings. When Allan Block was introduced in his area in the early 1990's, Mario was one of the first to try the "new product".

"My first Allan Block project was a set of three terraced walls, each about four ft. high (1.2 m). I made sure the walls were spaced properly and the rest was easy. With Allan Block, all you need is good crushed stone and some common sense. The blocks go together like butter on bread. I drive by that wall from time to time and it still looks great," says Mario.

***"The blocks go together like butter on bread"***

*Mario Iantosca - Contractor*

Steve and Civita Fulchini were just getting settled in to their new home in Hammersmith Village. Their homeowner association required all landscaping to be completed much sooner than they had anticipated, and knew they needed retaining walls. They stopped in at Linden and Malden Supply in Malden, MA and talked to John Rappoli for advice. John, a long time Allan Block dealer through Gilbert Block, took them through the AB Collections, explaining the price and color options along the way. Civita loved the look of the Europa Collection, Allan Block's antiqued line of products, and especially liked the patterned walls. Steve found a color in the Ashlar Collection that complimented their home's brick exterior perfectly, and at a more affordable price. They decided to go with an Ashlar Blend patterned wall.

Mario Iantosca was recommended to install the project. "I visited Steve and Civita at the site and they were thinking one larger wall would do the job. But I could see a set of three walls with a planting space in between, and they liked that idea too.

When I brought the engineer out to check the site and soil conditions, he wondered how I would get the stairway up through the walls and still meet code. I told him not to worry and to come back in a couple days to check the job. If you are used to working with your hands, Allan Block is easy. I get more block up in a day because you don't need footings or mortar, and the walls turn out beautiful," says Mario.



Steve and Civita are ecstatic with the work. They liked the front walls so well, they had Mario use the AB Stones in a matching color to build small walls in back and along the side of the drive. And Mario is happy to be building the same quality of walls his family has been building for generations. Old world craftsmanship with Allan Block.

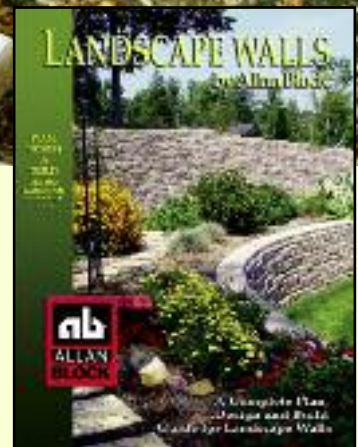
# Basic Installation



## Building a landscape wall.

Following is an excerpt from the new AB *Landscape Walls* Guide and the *How To Install* DVD. See your local Allan Block dealer for these materials, or visit [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) to watch the videos or download the guide.

*You should have a detailed design to ensure your wall and landscape project will be built correctly. Before building, use the Landscape Walls Guide to plan and design out the entire project to ensure the project will come together smoothly. The following shows how to build a gravity wall. See the Maximum Wall Height Chart on the next page to determine if your project will need reinforcement.*

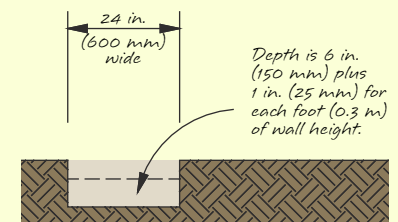


### Base Preparation for a Landscape Wall (no reinforcement needed)

- To start your layout, place stakes to represent the location of the front of the wall. Using a string line or paint, mark out the entire length. A garden hose is an excellent tool to use when laying out curved walls.
- Excavate the area by removing all surface vegetation and organic materials from the area. **These cannot be used as backfill material.**
- If the wall needs reinforcement due to height or soil conditions, see the *Landscape Walls Guide* for complete installation information.
- Starting at the lowest point, dig a base trench the length of the wall. For walls where the base trench steps up, see the *Landscape Walls Guide* for more information.
- Dig a base trench 24 in. (600 mm) wide the length of the wall.
- The depth of the trench will be 6 in. (150 mm) plus an additional 1 in. (25 mm) for each 1 ft. (300 mm) of wall height for the amount or buried block that is needed.
- Compact the base trench making a minimum of two passes with a walk behind plate compactor.
- **Foundation soils at the bottom of the base trench must be firm and solid.** If the soils are made up of heavy clay or wet soils, or the areas have been previously excavated, remove this material and replace with a granular material, compacting in 8 in. (200 mm) lifts or less.



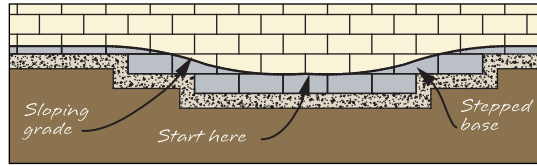
Mark and excavate area



Compact

## Base Material

- A drain pipe is required for any reinforced wall or any wall over 4 ft. (1.2 m) tall. Place the drain pipe at the lowest possible point toward the back of the trench and vent to daylight every 50 ft. (15 m).
- Place a minimum of 6 in. (150 mm) of wall rock in the base trench and rake smooth.
- Compact the wall rock making a minimum of two passes with a plate compactor.
- Check the entire length for level, and adjust as needed.



## Install Base Course

- Begin the base course at the lowest wall elevation.
- Place all blocks with the raised front lip facing up and forward on the base material near the front of the base trench.
- Check and adjust each block for level from side-to-side and front-to-back.
- Make minor adjustments by tapping the AB blocks with a dead blow hammer. It is acceptable to place up to 0.5 in. (13 mm) of coarse sand under the blocks to help level the base course.
- Irregularities in the base course become larger as the wall stacks up. Careful attention to a straight and level base course will ensure a quality finished wall.

## Backfilling and Compaction

- Fill in the area in front of the blocks with on-site soils. This will keep the base course blocks from shifting while filling and compacting.
- Fill the hollow cores of the base course and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with wall rock to the height of the block.
- Use infill or approved on-site soils to backfill behind the wall rock in lifts of no more than 8 in. (200 mm).
- Use a plate compactor to consolidate the wall rock directly behind the block then compact in a path parallel to the wall, working from the back of the block to the back of the excavated area with a minimum of 2 passes.
- Check the base course for level and adjust as necessary.

## Additional Courses

- Remove all excess material from the top surface of all blocks. This prepares a clean, smooth surface for placement of the next course.
- Stack the next course of blocks so that the vertical seams are offset from the blocks below by at least 1/4 the length of the block.
- Check each block for level and alignment, making adjustments as needed.
- Fill the hollow cores and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with wall rock to the height of the block.
- Use infill or approved onsite soils to backfill behind the wall rock in lifts of no more than 8 in. (200 mm).
- From the 2nd course and above use a plate compactor to compact directly on the blocks as well as the area behind the blocks. Compact in lifts of 8 in. (200 mm) or less.
- Repeating these steps, complete the wall to the desired height. See *the Landscape Walls Guide for information on finishing wall options.*

Maximum Wall Heights - AB Gravity Walls - Res. Appl.			
Condition above landscape wall	Soil Type	AB Stones from the AB and Ashlar Collection only	AB and Ashlar Collection (except AB Stones) and the Europa Collection
Level	Clay	3 ft 6 in 1.0 m	3 ft 2 in 0.9 m
	Silty/Sand	5 ft 4 in 1.6 m	4 ft 7 in 1.4 m
Surcharge 125 psf	Clay	1 ft 8 in 0.5 m	1 ft 4 in 0.4 m
	Silty/Sand	3 ft 10 in 1.1 m	3 ft 1 in 0.9 m
Slope 3:1	Clay	2 ft 8 in 0.8 m	2 ft 4 in 0.7 m
	Silty/Sand	4 ft 8 in 1.4 m	4 ft 1 in 1.2 m

For much more information see [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) for everything you need to build any landscape or retaining wall project from start to finish.

The gravity wall heights shown above do not account for seismic loading. Check with a local engineer for assistance if you are in a seismic area.

# Visit [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com)



## Allan Block Launches New Website

Allan Block is pleased to announce the launch of our new and enhanced website. It is packed full of information, photos, videos and more. It is also very easy and intuitive for the user to navigate. Visit [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) to find the answers to your questions.

On our web site you will find:

- Over 600 pages of information, photos, videos and more.
- The site is conveniently separated into four main customer categories:
  - Homeowners
  - Residential Contractors
  - Commercial Contractors
  - Engineers, Architects and Building Officials
- Easy navigation. There are many ways to reach each page, and most pages can be reached with no more than two clicks.
- Dealer Locator, Photo Library and Installation Videos are highlighted on the homepage, so you can get to the most popular pages right away.
- Programs such as Contractor Certification, AB Rewards, and Continuing Education Credits for engineers are also available.



Easy navigation



Hundreds of topics

Find information on Landscape or Retaining Walls, Courtyard Collection or AB Fence. See the What's New or Featured Items section for the latest and greatest. Check out the videos to see step-by-step instructions on how to plan, design and build your projects.



Detailed step-by-step videos

- Once a customer has browsed into the content of the site, it is easy to cross-browse to various categories, products and information.
- Coming Soon - AB International websites in Spanish, German, Dutch, French and more.
- Watch for much more to be added as it is available.

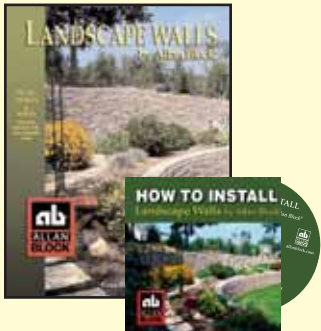


Extensive library of photos

# Tools for You



Get all the answers with our new **LANDSCAPE WALLS GUIDE** and **HOW TO INSTALL DVD**. They contain all the information a landscape contractor or a DIY homeowner needs to plan, design and build professional-quality landscape walls up to 6 feet high (1.8 m).



### Includes:

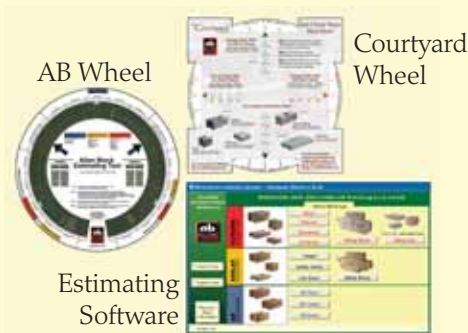
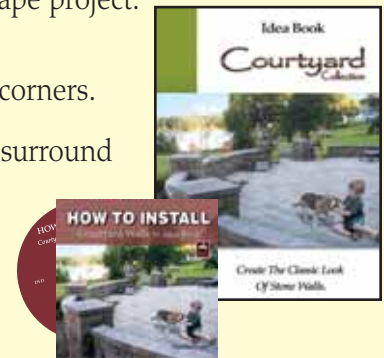
- Basic construction techniques for both gravity and reinforced landscape walls. Detailed information on how to build curves, stairs, step-ups and much more.
- Tips for avoiding problems commonly found in residential landscape wall construction.

## Learn how to install the Courtyard Collection™

Now you can create beautiful courtyard walls and posts with the Courtyard Collection from Allan Block. Use this versatile, easy-to-install system to enhance the beauty of any landscape project.

### Learn How To:

- Build walls, posts or pillars, curves and corners.
- Build a pond, patio enclosure, Bar-B-Q surround and more.
- Design and build projects you can do in a weekend.



## Estimating and Ordering are a Snap!

Estimating materials couldn't be easier. Allan Block offers both an estimating software program (located on our website) and a laminated calculator wheel for quickly estimating all the materials needed to build a landscape wall or Courtyard Collection projects. Visit our web site at [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) or your local AB professional for more information.

## AB Contractor Certification Rewards - "It's in the Bag"

The AB Rewards Program recognizes AB Certified installers for their commitment to building top-quality Allan Block walls. It is easy and the rewards get bigger at each level.

By achieving the Bronze level in the AB Rewards program you can receive this durable contractor bag for FREE.

Ask your local AB Representative or visit [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) for more details on how to get this great gift for building with Allan Block.



To receive this *Landscape Lifestyles* newsletter by e-mail, sign up at [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com).