1. **Choose your Paver Type:** Paver manufacturers are capable of manufacturing a wide variety of pavers. Pavers range in small 3 X 3 squares to large 12 X 12 squares; the types vary from a rectangle to a large unit, with 6 to 8 different sizes. *When you choose your paver take into consideration the complete scope of your project.* How big is your area? A large area allows you to use multiple sizes of pavers. Multiple sizes allow you to choose a pattern which will break up the seams and lines. In a smaller area, utilizing one or two different paver sizes will keep the area neat and uncluttered in appearance.

2. **Choose your Color:** Manufacturers are coming up with a vast number of blended color pavers. They range from a through mix (which means the color is blended throughout the complete paver), to a face mix, meaning the color is in the tops (face) of the paver only. Which one is better for you all depends on your budget and project. When choosing the paver color, look at your house color, the color of your roof, the color of your backyard, and other colors in the natural landscape. Take all of these into consideration and decide if you want to compliment those colors or if you want a contrast. You can also ask the dealer for samples that you can take home, or see if you can purchase some and return them after you have made a decision. A 4 X 4 ft. sample area will give you a good visual.

3. **Choose your Pattern:** Most pavers offer multiple patterns to choose from. Check the dealer or manufacturer websites, or obtain brochures from local dealers. The easiest and most efficient way to select your pattern is to choose something simple that can be repeated easily. Random patterns are more difficult to lay and will take more time to implement.

4. **Consider what’s out your window:** Often, homeowners consider only the appearance of their new outdoor space when taking on a paver project. We recommend that a homeowner looks out the windows and sliders from inside the home. As you sit in your favorite spots, look at the patio and the potential lines or pattern. How will your pavers look from that spot? Set up the 4 X 4 ft. sample area so you can see if from those locations. Determining this before you start will be easier than rearranging your living space later.

5. **Slope away from structures:** You need to slope the patio away from the house to prevent rainwater from entering the basement or seeping into the foundation, which can cause moisture problems. This slope is normally a 1-2% drop away from the house or structure. This normally
equals a ¼ inch drop per 4 feet. If your paver area is 12 feet long then your drop would be ¾ inch.

6. **Vary the color:** For the best color variegation in your project, you need to take pavers from the sides of all of the pallets, not solely from the top of the pallet. You also need to remove pavers from multiple pallets (if applicable) and mix them as you work. This will give you the best color mix available. Removing pavers from the top layer of the pallet will give you a checker board color pattern.

7. **Build a flat base:** The base or foundation that you set your pavers on is extremely important because the shape and look of your project will appear exactly like your base/foundation. Renting a vibratory plate compactor will help ensure your base is compacted properly, thus reducing the chance of a low spot later. Use a long, straight level or 2x4, and check for low spots or high spots. You may not see them now, but you certainly will see them once you have laid the pavers. Your base should extend 6 inches beyond your actual paved area. This will allow for stability at the edges and will give room for the edge restraints to be secured into the ground.

8. **Restrain the edges:** One often overlooked but important area concerns edge restraints. Edge restraints hold the pavers together, enabling interlock across the entire area. There are multiple choices when it comes to edge restraints: metal, plastic and concrete are all options. The most popular is plastic. It’s easier to use and can be cut in specified places for turns. Whether you use metal, plastic or concrete it is very important that it is installed properly. Read the manufacturer’s instructions for additional installation information.

9. **Save some for later:** Accidents and spills happen. Save some pavers in case you accidentally break one, someone drops a glass of red wine, or you’re BBQ leaks grease and oil. You can easily remove the paver and replace it with another. You might also want to place the saved pavers in an area that gets the same sun exposure as your project, so that the color will be consistent.

10. Go to Basalite’s website [www.basalite.com](http://www.basalite.com) and look at the paver picture section for ideas! You can also visit [www.ICPI.org](http://www.ICPI.org) the Interlocking Concrete Paver Institute, or call your Basalite customer service representative at 800-776-6690.

For more information on pavers, retaining walls, and other do-it-yourself hardscape projects, visit us at [www.basalite.com](http://www.basalite.com)