



## Taking It Outdoors

Spring will be here before you know it. For some people, the sight of trees and shrubs starting to bud and the warmer weather sends an overwhelming urge to start tearing into projects and getting the home ready for the outdoors. Oregonians are truly blessed with a climate that gives us all four noticeable and livable seasons. We don't get six-to-eight feet of snow in the winter and we don't experience 120-degree summers. We do, however, get rain—and lots of it. Here in the Northwest, there are so many homes with decks, and for most decks, those many months of rain can take its toll.

The average deck lasts about 10-15 years in the Northwest, and if yours is approaching that age, it may be time to take a serious look at its structural integrity. Most catastrophic deck accidents are from structural failures due to improper attachment to the house or simply neglect in detecting potential problems. Nails, screws, and bolts that hold it together will start to walk out or loosen as the wood gets wet and dry throughout the years. Preserved or pressure treated wood will rot through time. If you're not comfortable with doing a self-diagnosis on your deck, it's in your best interest to call a professional. The last thing anyone wants is to start the summer with loved ones or friends getting hurt on your deck from a loose railing giving out, or worse yet, the entire deck falling away from the house. To see examples of this, go to Youtube.com and type in, "why do decks collapse?"

The beginning of spring may bring the idea of building that great outdoor entertainment space you've always dreamed of. A trend that's gaining popularity is the outdoor living room, giving homeowners the opportunity to entertain around a bar or outdoor fireplace, or simply enjoy the big game on television. The outdoor living room is the perfect answer to those "let's take it outdoors" evenings.

Finding reputable companies who specialize in all outdoor living spaces can be daunting. Some only do decks, while others only do hardscapes, not to mention the kitchen professionals. If an outdoor living space is in your future, look for a company that can take care of all your needs at once; a company that you feel comfortable and confident with. How long have they been in business and will they stand behind their work by offering written guarantees for the structure and workmanship? Do they get all the proper permits required by the county you live in, and will your project be inspected by that same county to ensure that it's all in compliance? We all look forward to the spring and summer months ahead with the people we enjoy. Have the time of your life and be safe when you're "taking it outdoors." Being with friends and family and enjoying it outdoors is one of Oregon's greatest gifts.

For more information about a complete project for your outdoor spaces, Archadeck of West Portland can help. You can call them at 503-925-8756 or visit [www.westportland.archadeck.com](http://www.westportland.archadeck.com). CCB #204750.

