DIY garden projects

How to build a Raised Formal Pool

It is very simple to construct, however it may be necessary for you to get some professional assistance in cutting the timber sleepers.

The pond is a simple rectangle measuring roughly 8x4 and about 12 deep.

I have used sleepers as they provide an instant wall. However if you possess simple bricklaying skills then the side walls can be constructed form brick or concrete block, thus there is no limit to the size of your pond.

Materials you will need
Pond liner (amount depends on size of pond)

Fabric pond insulation

3 x Railway sleepers 8 x 8

Coach bolts or Heavy duty L brackets

Sand

Timber or slabs for coping

Rake Spirit level

Lump hammer

Short length of PVC - 1 pipe to provide an overflow.

Step by step Instructions - Step 1
Step 1

Once you have chosen the site for your pond, roughly level the site with a rake. A few shovelfulls of stonedust or coarse sand can be added to the site to ensure an even base for the sleepers to rest on.
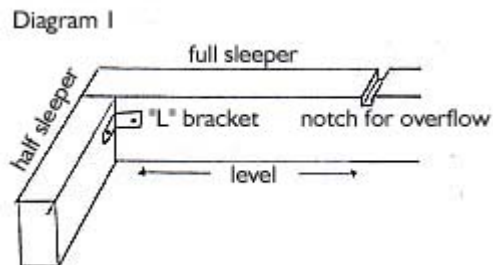
Place your first full sleeper in position, then once you are satisfied that the position is correct, using a spirit level ensure the sleeper is level horizontally.

Cut one sleeper in half and use these two halves as the ends of your pool, using the same method for levelling.

Secure the sleepers together using coach bolts or heavy duty L

brackets. Place the final full sleeper to create your side wall.

Use a carpenters right angle to ensure that the internal angles are as close to 90 degrees as possible. Finally cut a small channel, approximately an inch wide to allow the overflow pipe to sit neatly in the sleeper (see diagram 1).

Diagram I

Tip - Use stonedust to pack underneath the sleeper to ensure that it is level.

Step 2

Place the sand in the bottom of your sleeper frame to ensure a level base to your pond (2-3 should be sufficient).

Now line the internal walls of your pond with the fabric insulation. This will prevent any rough edges puncturing the liner.

Tip - Use a heavy duty stapler to secure the fabric to the sleepers.

Step 3

The size of your pond liner is dependant on the length and depth of your sleeper.

Your liner should be:

Length of liner Length of your pond + (depth x 2)

Width of liner Width of pond + (depth x 2)

Place the liner centrally on top of your sleeper frame, and hold in place with a few round stones.

Now you can begin to fill the pond using a hose pipe. As the weight of the water lowers the liner into the sleeper frame, gradually firm the liner into place, making neat folds in the corners.

Allow the pond to fill to the desired level.

Tip - It would be wise to allow an extra foot or so on both the width and the length of the liner, to allow for any mistakes when positioning the liner.
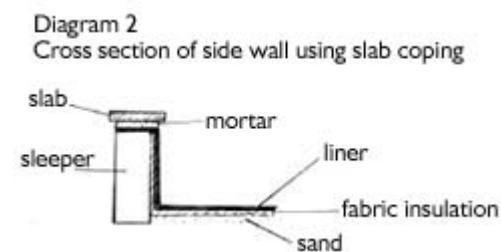
Step 4

Once you are satisfied that your liner is sitting neatly inside your frame, place your overflow pipe in its recess and trim off any excess liner on the external edges of your frame.

You can now place your coping on top of the exposed liner. Slabs, timber, decking boards or even crazy paving make an ideal coping.

The type of coping used is dependant on the width of your sleeper and indeed your personal preference.

Not only does the coping hide the exposed liner, but also provides an effective finishing touch (See diagram 2).

Diagram 2
Cross section of side wall using slab coping

slab
mortar
sleeper
liner
fabric insulation
sand

Tip - If you are using cement to bed slabs or crazy paving, avoid dropping any excess cement into the pond as this may affect any plant or fish life.

Step 5

You can now give yourself a pat on the back. The hard work is all over.

All that is left is to add any aquatic plants, if required, or to install a fountain. So now, relax and enjoy your new water feature.

Tip - The cable for a fountain can be run through the overflow pipe to avoid any unsightly cables showing.