

AD IT YOURSELF

33 Deck Railing Ideas to Add Fun and Function to Your Outdoor Space

From classic to contemporary: Elevate your outdoor living space with these railing design ideas

By Abid Haque
May 10, 2023



Design: Sara Simon/Handsome Salt Photo: Jenny Siegart

If you find yourself sifting through seemingly endless [deck ideas](#), take a moment to zoom in and pay close attention to deck railing ideas. Railing systems are a crucial part of any deck and deserve as much consideration as the actual structure. Modern railing systems can span everything from traditional white wood decks with wood posts to cable deck railings and glass panels. So whether you're a homeowner who's building a new deck or if you find yourself in the middle of a [remodel](#), there's plenty to consider. Regardless if you're googling "what is a baluster" or if you're a seasoned pro, here are a few questions you should ask yourself before embarking on your decking project.

What should I consider before picking a deck railing?

According to Megan Dufresne of [MC Design](#), when approaching deck design, there are two major considerations: the materials to be used and the best use of space. Dufresne says, "After those two elements are locked in, the rest can fall into place. When it comes to materials, I use the overall design of the home to dictate the types of materials used in the deck. As for space and scale, no matter how large an area you are working with, using the space efficiently is important." Other important considerations are safety (especially if you have young children) and privacy. The right deck railing will address all of these without sacrificing quality or breaking the bank.

What's the most popular deck railing design?

Deck railings are like opinions—most homeowners have some. And while you may think there's only a handful of options for handrails and balusters, the true limits are your own creativity and building code (if applicable). Most designers agree that the best deck railings and deck ideas should [match your landscaping](#), but if you're just looking for the most popular design, it's wood deck railings (or composite) in white with simple vertical balusters. While these are typically builder-issued standard decks, they can be elevated with a simple [DIY paint job](#) or by adding unique post caps.

What types of material can be used for railing systems?

Just as the materials available for deck boards have progressed, so have those for deck railings. Standard pressure-treated woods and metals have been replaced by composite and vinyl railing materials that are weather resistant and offer a wide variety of versatile aesthetic options. The most obvious benefits of the manufactured materials are the lack of splintering (especially important with young children and pets) and the long-term durability of the product with little to no maintenance. Before you jump on one of these for your deck railing ideas, though, it's important to note that they come with a higher price tag when compared to simple metal and wood options.



Photo: Garrett Rowland

4/33

Use opaque deck railings as privacy screens

If you want your space to feel quiet, think about implementing a privacy screen by using solid, opaque panels on walls to create your deck railing. To avoid it feeling like a plain wall, you can include a short strip of glass along the top for a sense of modern minimalism. According to designer [Ghislaine Yibat](#), this railing accomplishes the goal of "enhancing and blending in rather than detracting. There were so many outdoor spaces for this house that it was important to have all the outdoor spaces be quieter, which creates a really relaxing feel."



Photo: Garrett Rowland

5/33

Leverage pillars

Outdoor structural elements, like the pillars on this deck, lend themselves as natural points for the deck railing. To make the use of pillars seem deliberate, [Yibat](#) used the same paneling in the balusters. That, along with the clean white paint and simple furniture pieces, creates an understated but interesting space.