

Do's and Don'ts for Do-It-Yourself Deck Builders

(NAPSA)—Afraid that you're doomed to be deck-less? You're not alone. According to the "Build With Skil" survey, more than 66 percent of Americans think deck building is difficult.

To help increase do-it-yourselfers' deck building confidence, Skil has named May 31-June 6 as National Build Your Own Deck Week. Mr. Fix-It, Lou Manfredini, has deck building do's and don'ts to help DIYers get decked out this summer.

DO's

Do your homework.

- Talk to homeowners whose yards feature decks you desire and similar dimensions.

- Visit Web sites, such as BuildWithSkil.com, that have deck design capabilities and offer information on tools and material lists.

- Curious about costs? A 16-by-20 foot DIY deck costs an average of \$19.70 per square foot, which translates to an average cost of \$6,300. Hiring a pro costs an average of 50 percent greater than this average cost.

Do follow codes.

- Ensure the deck can adequately carry the load. National building codes for decks require them to support at least 40 pounds per square foot.

- Check with your community about deck height or size restrictions.

- Many local governments require a review of your deck plans prior to construction to ensure it's up to code.

Do choose your tools wisely.

- Stock your tool box with a measuring tape, various carpenter squares, builder's and chalk lines, and levels. Essential power tools include corded and cordless Skil-saws, drill/driver, sander and jig-saw. Skil offers a 5-tool combo kit with all the essentials and a retail price of under \$200.

DON'Ts

Don't forget to measure twice and cut once.

- Use the right measuring tools for the project.

- New laser-guided tools can help DIYers make more precise cuts.

Don't underestimate building time.

- On average, a 12-by-12 foot deck can be completed by two peo-



Building a deck begins with the right tools.

ple over two weekends, with more complicated decks usually taking 64 to 85 work hours.

Don't forget to build safely.

- Use safety goggles when using power tools.

- Use power tools with enhanced safety features, such as Skil-saws that have safety latches to prevent tools from accidentally turning on.

Reward The Work

DIYers can earn backyard bragging rights by entering the Skil Deck-It-Yourself contest. Skil will select the five best DIY decks built and completed between May 31, 2004 and August 6, 2004. Five winners will each receive the following prize package:

- Complete line of Skil Power Tools® (10 in total)

- Coleman® 5600 Grill

- Brookstone All Weather Rocker and Grill Alert™ Talking Remote Thermometer

- Commercial Grade Teak Bench from outdoordecor.com™

- Quilted Hammock and Wind Chimes from 101 Hammocks

- Sunpentown Misting Fan

- Bug Eater Mosquito and Insect Trap

- Cuisinart® Flavor Duo™ Frozen Yogurt-Ice Cream & Sorbet Marker

- Dockers® Men's Sunglasses

- Malibu® Outdoor Landscape Lighting

- Thompson's® Water Seal® Advanced Wood Protector.

To enter this contest, visit www.BuildWithSkil.com. Entries can also be sent to: Skil Build a Deck, 444 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 600, Chicago, IL 60611.