

Concrete base method

Tools Required:

Pegs and good quality string

Building sand

Timber for base formwork

Tape measure

Rake

Spade

Yard / Sweeping brush

Standard cement or bags of dry mixed concrete

Polythene (only necessary during wet weather)

Damp sacks (only necessary during warm weather)

Step 1:

Ensure you have allowed enough distance from any surrounding hedges or fences for easy access to all sides. Using pegs and string to mark out the base 2 inch (5 cm) larger than the area of the building on each side. Finally, measure diagonals to ensure the area is square.

Step 2:

A concrete base requires 3 inch (7.5 cm) of compacted hardcore underneath the 3 inch (7.5 cm) concrete layer. The base can be level with the ground or raised above it. If it is to be level excavate the top earth to 6 inch (15 cm) to allow for the hardcore layer and 3 inch (7.5 cm) thickness of concrete. Level the area with a rake and spade and remove the pegs

Step 3:

Set up levelled framework. This involves measuring, cutting and fitting timber, to the shape and size of the base in order to contain the concrete. Check the diagonals to ensure the framework is square. At this stage you must also ensure the framework is level, as this will determine whether your base is 100% level. Next, spread a layer of well compacted hardcore and cover with a liberal amount of sand.

Step 4:

Mix concrete using one part cement to five parts ballast or use bags of dry-mixed concrete to which you just add water. Small amounts of water should be added at a time and mixed into the concrete mix to ensure excessive amounts are not added making the cement sloppy, as the concrete should be kept on the dry side. Spread the concrete evenly and slightly proud of the framework. This can be then levelled off with a long straight edge of timber resting on the framework using a sawing motion slowly over the entire surface of the freshly laid concrete. If wet weather is forecast, cover the concrete with polythene for 24-hours. In warm weather cover the base with damp sacks and sprinkle them with water over a 24 hour period, this will ensure the result is a smooth, sound, level base.

