

# Top trends to inspire your outdoor living

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Outdoor living spaces rank first among special function rooms desired by consumers, according to the American Institute for Architects, and so homeowners are expected to be going all-in for the outdoors in 2018.

Trex Company, a maker of premium decking and railing, has gleaned insights from contractors, homeowners and industry experts to compile the following outdoor living trends that will dominate this year:

## Year-round enjoyment

Among the biggest trends is a shift away from seasonality as consumers adopt more of a year-round mindset, no longer restricting outdoor living to spring and summer. Thanks to new

high-performance materials and innovative design approaches, homeowners everywhere are transforming their outdoor spaces into multi-seasonal extensions of their homes. For example, Trex contractors have reported an uptick in requests for its RainEscape deck drainage system by clients looking to add multi-seasonal living space underneath an elevated deck.

## Minimal maintenance, maximum enjoyment

Just because people are spending more time outdoors doesn't mean they're willing to put in extra hours for upkeep. In fact, high-maintenance materials like wood are seeing a decrease in demand as people are opting for offerings that deliver better

performance and sustainability.

Unlike wood, high-performance composites resist fading, staining, scratching and mold - and won't rot, warp, crack or splinter. No sanding, staining or painting is required, and food and drink spills wash off easily with just soap and water.

## Comfy cozy

Among the hottest design influences right now is "hygge" (pronounced hoo-gah) - the Scandinavian term for a feeling of coziness and comfort. This year, outdoor spaces will beckon homeowners and their guests to relax and rejuvenate with hygge-inspired accents, from plush cushions and throws to protective pergolas, cozy warming features and outdoor lighting.

## Residential goes commercial

While railing matched to the decking remains popular, an increasing number of homeowners are taking advantage of the complementary decking and railing pairings afforded by new railing materials in modern, metal finishes, as well as sleek designs inspired by commercial architecture. More homeowners are inspired by outdoor spaces they find in commercial settings, such as hotels and urban rooftops, and want to replicate those looks in their homes. A prime example of this commercial-to-residential trend is the growing popularity of horizontal railings such as rod rail - a sleek, industrial look that's ideal for optimizing a panoramic view.

## Hide and chic

With the increased usage of outdoor living spaces comes higher demand for chic decor and privacy. An easy design trick that adds personal style and functionality, lattice panels are perfect for enhancing privacy and concealing storage areas or unsightly views. With styles ranging from romantic to deco, lattice panels can be integrated into any outdoor area and applied to structures such as arbors, trellises and gazebos, or used as decorative wainscoting or deck skirting.

## Fun and games

Kids are not the only ones who enjoy playing outside. Outdoor play spaces for all ages are on the rise, including everything from swimming pools and embedded sandboxes to regulation cornhole courts, horseshoe pits and dedicated spaces for volleyball, badminton and bocce ball.

Beyond yard games, electronics manufacturers now offer televisions and entertainment systems specifically designed for the outdoors, taking into consideration differences in lighting and outdoor acoustics. Meanwhile, new storage options include durable wall-mounted television and entertainment centers that beautifully protect pricey electronics from the elements, while concealing all of the unsightly - and potentially unsafe - cords and cables.

For more information about outdoor living trends, go to [www.trex.com](http://www.trex.com). ■

