

## BUILD A CONCRETE SLAB



Every home should have an outdoor entertainment area. A great place to entertain family and friends. But no outdoor entertainment is complete without the humble brick barbecue. There's nothing like having a cold drink with your mates, chatting around a sizzling open flamed barbecue. The aroma of food cooked on a wood fired barbecue is enough to make the taste buds go wild, and it doesn't hurt if you slip in the fact to your buddies that you built this little beauty yourself! Follow our step by step easy instructions. I can smell the barbecue already... beautiful!  
HAPPY BUILDING!



### STEP 1:

After selecting a suitable site, dig out a rectangular hole for your barbecue box foundation slab, making sure that the base is level. The size of the slab will be determined by the size of your barbecue.  
**Hint:** Lay out 4.5 bricks long and 4 bricks wide out on the ground, leaving a 10 mm mortar gap between them.

This will give you the slab base size you will require, add 50 mm onto each side for good measure.

See diagram 1.

When digging out your hole ensure you have allowed enough extra room to allow for the thickness of wood you are using to build your frame, to ensure you maintain the finished slab size you require.

### STEP 2:

Build a timber frame mould to suit the slab size required. Use a smooth surfaced timber that doesn't warp when wet. Ask your hardware supplier for a suitable timber and pre-made timber stakes. You'll need them to brace the outside of your timber frame. See diagram 2.

Your finished concrete slab should be a minimum of 100mm thick. 50mm below ground level and 50mm above. ie: you only need to dig to a depth of 50mm. This will ensure adequate barbecue water drainage when hosing and cleaning slab. Make sure your finished height is level on all sides. Use a spirit level for this task. See diagram 3.

### STEP 3:

Gently soak the excavated slab site with water, and let it stand for 30 minutes. This stops the soil from drawing water out of the fresh concrete and weakening it.

### STEP 4:

Prepare your Australian Builders Concrete according to user and safety instructions on packaging. When ready, only half fill the mould with concrete (that's about 50mm). Level concrete out roughly with a spade or shovel.

### STEP 5:

Add steel reinforcement rods into your concrete mix at this stage.

**Hint:** Think ahead! Pre-prepare items required to complete this stage. You can purchase steel concrete reinforcement products from your local steel supplier. Get them cut to size, save yourself the trouble.

If you're using our guide template, you'll need 3-4 10mm diameter steel reinforcement rods cut to the longest dimension of your slab mould and 3-4 more for the width. See diagram 4.

**Hint:** When in doubt consult your steel retailer, they're the experts and can calculate exactly what you need and what your options are.

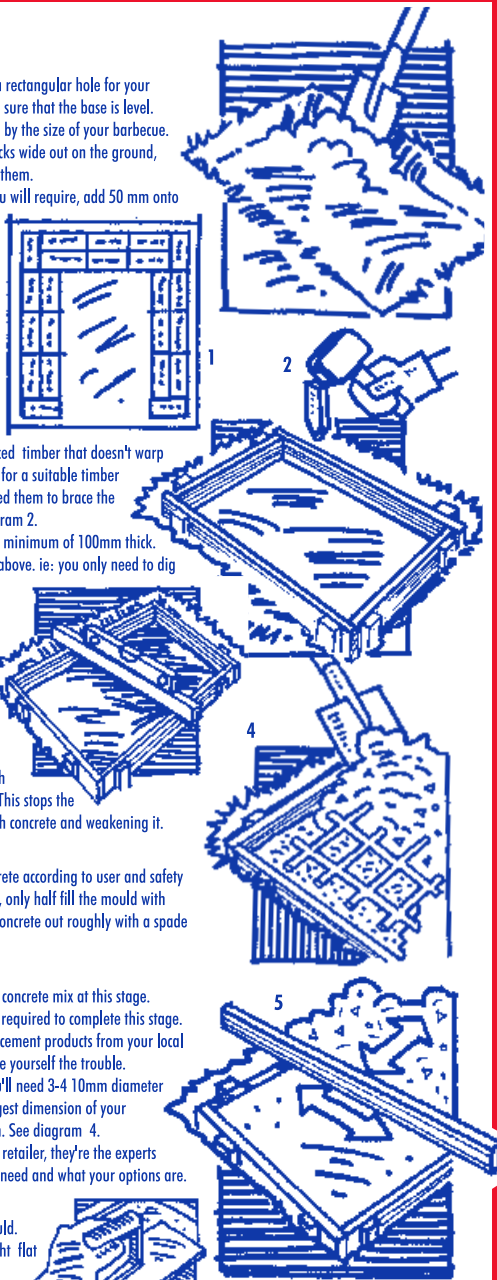
### STEP 6:

Finish filling the timber frame mould. Slightly over fill, then with a straight flat length of timber level the surface.

**Hint:** Ensure the timber is wider than the frame width, to enable the sawing action required to work the excess concrete from back to front. See diagram 5.

Smooth finish the concrete slab surface using a wooden float trowel.

**Hint:** A smooth slab surface is best. It allows for easier sweeping and cleaning up of ash debris. No brushed surface here, please.



### Important:

For best results, allow the slab to cure for at least two days, preferably 7 days. During this time protect the slab against weather and water evaporation by covering it with a plastic sheet, damp paper or hessian cloth.

## LAYING BRICKS



There's nothing more rewarding than building-it-yourself. Brick Laying is great fun! Remember the golden rule of B.I.Y. "Never bite off more than you can chew". Work at your own pace, not the dock. At the end of the day a straight wall is what you want. Bad workmanship is unforgiving.  
**Hint:** Build a straight timber guide on each corner of your barbecue. This will ensure your walls will go up straight. Remove when finished. See diagram 10.

A string line and level will ensure brick courses stay level.  
HAPPY BUILDING!



### STEP 1:

The walls of your barbecue will be double brick (or 2 courses) thick. Start off with a mortar-free practice run, using the first course of bricks, to mark out the finished size. To do this take 22 bricks and place them directly on the hardened slab.

Make sure there is a gap of 10mm between each brick, and that they are all straight and square. See diagram 2. With a piece of chalk or marker pen, mark around the outside and inside of brick course. See Project Sheet 1. "Brick Planter Boxes" Once marked remove the bricks to reveal only the marked area. This will be our guide for laying the first course of brickwork.

### STEP 2:

Let the fun begin! Mix up a batch of Australian Builders Mortar according to user and safety directions on packaging. Apply enough mortar with your brickies trowel between the chalk markings on slab surface to lay 2-3 bricks at a time, to a thickness of no more than 10mm. See diagram 3. **Hint:** Why not add some colour to the job. Australian Builders Colouring Agent or Oxides can create some stunning effects to your finished project with a minimum of fuss. You will not be disappointed. **Hint:** Don't mix too much mortar at the one time, small batches more often is the way to go! Take your time what's the hurry?

### STEP 3:

Lay your first course of bricks directly onto this mortar, as you did in the dry run. For this first layer though, do not place any mortar between the bricks. Leave 10mm vertical joints free of mortar. These gaps will serve as the barbecue wall drainage holes. Using the spirit level, check that these bricks are level and of equal height.

### STEP 4:

Now begin to lay the second course. This time you must:

Alter the configuration of the bricks, so they overlap for strength.

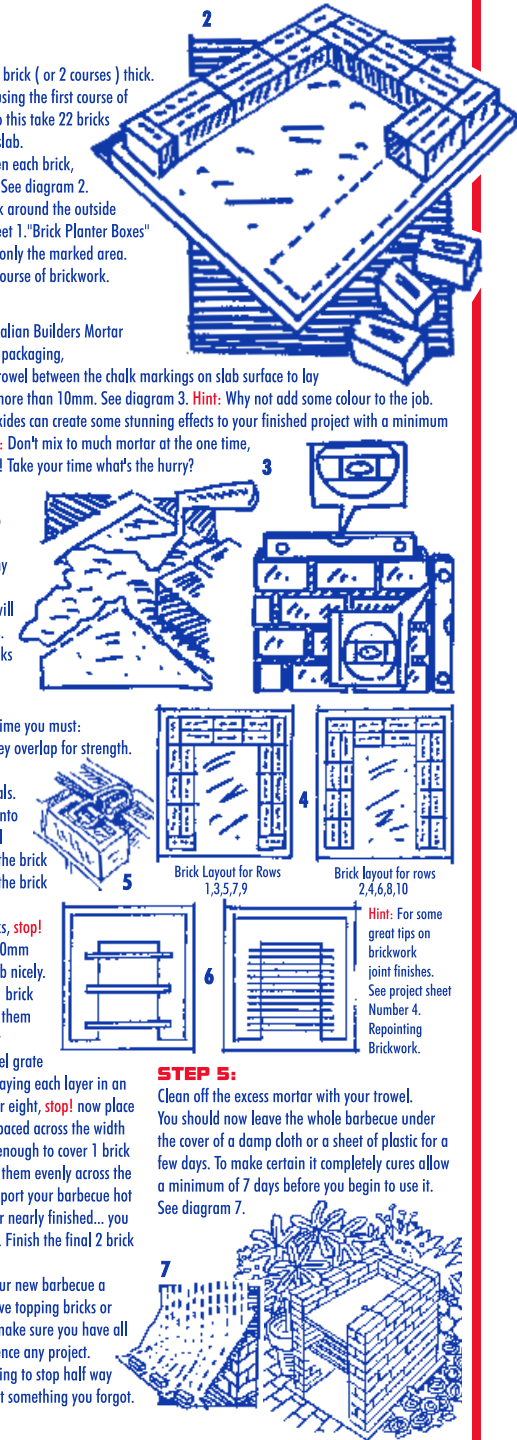
See diagram 4. **Tip:** Every second row add a "double brick tie" at 1 metre intervals.

See diagram 5. Also start adding mortar into the vertical gaps between the bricks for all remaining brick courses. Continue laying the brick courses (one through to ten), alternating the brick configuration each time. See diagram 4.

**Important:** After the fourth course of bricks, **stop!** now place your fire grid in position. Use 10mm heavy duty steel rods. 12-15 will do the job nicely.

They should be cut long enough to cover 1 brick width on each side. See diagram 6. Space them evenly across the width of the barbecue or alternatively you can use a heavy duty steel grate substitute cut to size. Now continue brick laying each layer in an alternating pattern until you come to layer eight, **stop!** now place 3-4 10mm heavy duty steel rods, evenly spaced across the width of the barbecue. They should be cut long enough to cover 1 brick width on each side. See diagram 6. Space them evenly across the width of the barbecue. These rods will support your barbecue hot plate, when your mortar has fully set. Your nearly finished... you can taste those gourmet sausages already. Finish the final 2 brick courses and your done! Good Work!

**Hint:** If you still want a challenge, give your new barbecue a touch of class by cementing some decorative topping bricks or masonry slabs. **Hint:** Always plan ahead make sure you have all your materials at hand before you commence any project. There is nothing more annoying than having to stop half way through what you are doing, to go and get something you forgot. I really hate that, you will too!



**Hint:** For some great tips on brickwork joint finishes. See project sheet Number 4. Repointing Brickwork.

### STEP 5:

Clean off the excess mortar with your trowel. You should now leave the whole barbecue under the cover of a damp cloth or a sheet of plastic for a few days. To make certain it completely cures allow a minimum of 7 days before you begin to use it. See diagram 7.

