

Design and Create a Dream Stream



Streams are simple to build, but can easily become very difficult if a few rules aren't followed. When designing streams, the main thing to look for is elevation changes that can work for or against you. Elevations working for you will have the slope coming towards the your viewing area (such as a patio or deck or verandah).

Good slopes can make stream design much easier. All you need is to carve the hillside to create a natural area for a water course. Be sure the stream traverses across the slope to increase the viewing area and exposure, and to create a more natural looking streambed. You'll want to make it look as though the water has eroded away the soil, exposing the stone underneath.



Infinite Variations with Limited Stones.

You can create many different variations in stream style with just a few types of rocks by using various stream construction methods. A series of cascading falls that transition into wide sheets of water will create a variety of sounds and sights to be enjoyed by onlookers.



Creating a Million Dollar View.

Views from the home and surrounding seating areas are always targeted first when designing streams and waterfalls. If your budget allows, start the stream far enough away from the viewing areas so people are drawn into the landscape to explore the source of the water. Interactive water features will get the greatest responses because they're fun.

To make the stream as interesting as possible, be sure the stream gets narrow in areas, and then widen out and slow down in others. Use a good mix of stone and gravel to create a natural look. Fill the streambed with aquatic plants, and you've just created an awesome supplement to your filtration system.

The hardest part about streams is learning how the water reacts in certain situations. When a stream is long and without much slope, the water will tend to move too slowly, causing water to well up along the sides. This can become a problem if the edges aren't high enough.

We're all drawn to water for many different reasons. The bottom line is that the thrill of exploration is in all of us, and you can really run with the idea of creating a miniature wilderness in an ordinary backyard by adding twists and turns to your stream design.



The Shoreline – Where Everything Happens

The shoreline is where everything happens. The greater this area, the greater the enjoyment your clients will get from their water feature. The shoreline is where the marginal plants interact with terrestrial plantings, where your clients will feed the fish, and the paths they'll follow during walks around the pond.

So how do you increase the shoreline in a small space? With streams. Deep streams are more pond-like, allowing fish to swim up into them, while shallow streams are fast moving and produce beautiful sounds. A winding stream will give you the greatest shoreline for the money. Combining a long stream with a pond is the best scenario.



An Added Stream Benefit An often overlooked benefit of adding a stream to your client's project is the filtration and oxygenation of the water. Crashing falls will add life-giving oxygen to the anoxic pond depths. Larger projects should always have a stream for this purpose alone. Large ponds that are a half-acre or greater may never be thoroughly emptied and cleaned, but their streams can be.

It's relatively easy to shut the pumps down for a day and thoroughly clean a stream bed. You'll be amazed at how effective they are as a silt trap. Cleaning the stream will help remove excess nutrients without the cost of cleaning a large pond.



Human Interaction If nobody is around to hear, see, or interact with a water feature, it might as well not exist in an ornamental situation. Ponds and streams need to be designed with people in mind. Take advantage of human nature and cater to your customer's needs and wants. It may be as simple as aiming a waterfall and stream toward the master bedroom window, or by placing a bench in the right spot.

Water in general, has the ability to increase your client's interaction with the outdoors. Streams are highly versatile and they create nature's music as they change gradients and cross the landscape. Add a pathway, bridge, or stepping stones and you'll be raising the level of enjoyment your customer experiences with your creation. It's just a matter of honing your design and construction skills!



Stream Construction Tips to Remember

- Always slope the streambed towards the pond.
- Have areas within the stream where the water can pool.
- If the stream narrows in one place, open it back up downstream.
- Leave several inches of soil and liner above the proposed water level in the stream.
- The water depth of the stream is determined by the height of the weir in the closest downstream waterfall.
- High water flow rates need a wider stream and/or higher edges.

For more construction tips, please refer to [The Pond Builder's Bible](#), available at your local Aquascape distributor.

For some inspiration, have a look at our [gallery](#) of photos.