

# BUILDING A SHED BASE

How to build a shed base is a very popular question to diydoctor and in all honesty there are a number of ways to do it. We have chosen a standard construction method that allows for a damp proof membrane under the slab to stop damp rising up through it. The slab is designed to be above ground and is 6 inches thick. For small sheds this could be dug into the ground removing the need for brickwork to the edges. Simply dig the hole 300mm wider and longer than your shed floor, 100mm deep (providing the ground underneath is solid) and pour the concrete onto a damp proof membrane you have laid inside. However you build your shed base you need to make sure the ground is quite level over the area of your base.

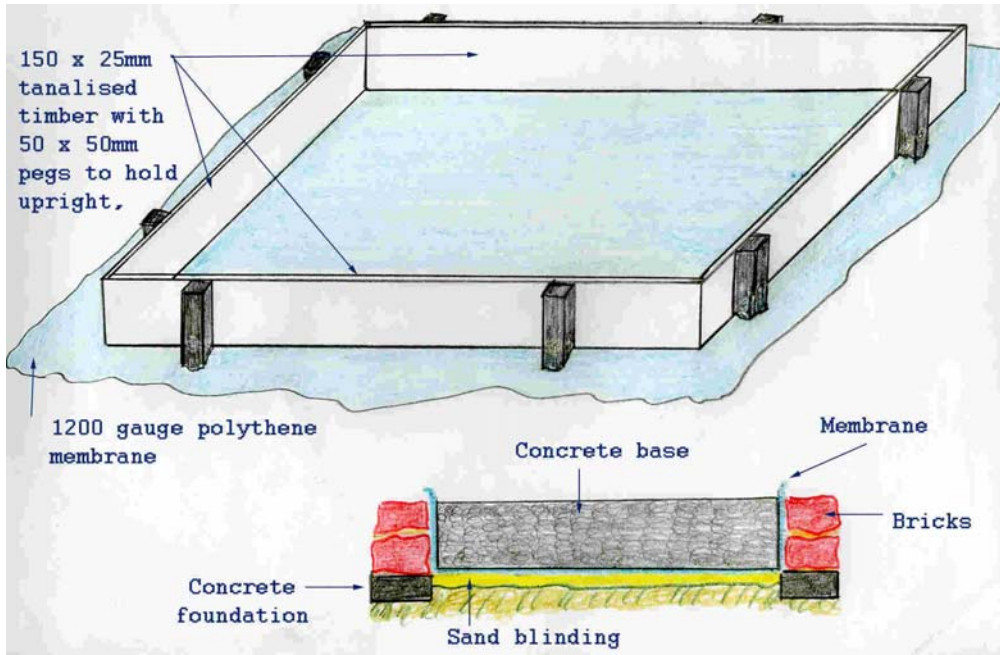
For the above ground method you first need to decide if your ground is firm enough to lay a slab without a hardcore sub-base. To do this get a 50mm x 50mm post and without sharpening the end try and drive it into the ground. This should be hard to do beyond 150mm deep.

If the ground is firm enough then carry on with the instructions below. If the peg goes in too easily then remove 4 inches of soil for an area of ground which is 500mm wider and longer than the floor of your shed and fill this with scalpings. Scalpings are crushed stone aggregate and available from aggregate and builders merchants. They are a little more expensive than broken brick hardcore but much much easier to lay and compact.

If it is necessary to compact scalpings for your base, then a machine called a "whacker plate" or "vibrating plate" can be hired from you local tool hire shop.



Now we have a base area ready. It should, in all cases, be 300mm longer and wider than your shed floor and as level as possible. Using the diagram below follow the instructions for an above ground base.



In the diagram above the damp proof membrane, which should be at least 1000 gauge polythene as seen below, is shown going under the formwork (frame) for the base. This is only done so you can see where it goes in relation to the construction. Its actual position is inside the frame.

Click on the images to buy the tools.



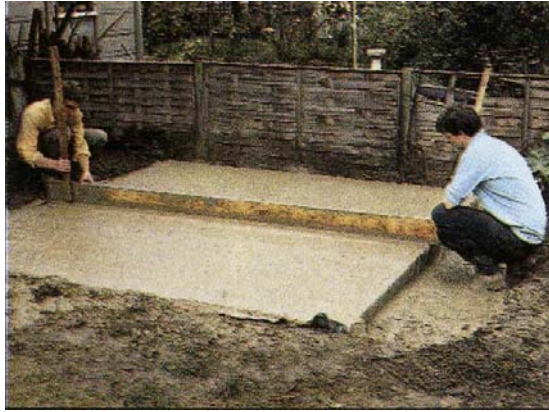
trowel

Polythene membrane  
Pointing trowel

Club, or lump hammer

Bricklaying





While the concrete is going hard, without disturbing the posts (of which there should be at least 300mm in the ground) dig a small trench all the way around the base, right next to the frame, about 5 inches wide and 2 inches deep. Fill this with concrete also. It is the foundations for the brick wall that surrounds the base.

This brick wall serves two purposes. It holds the damp proof membrane up so no ground water can seep between the underside of the slab and the membrane and it also gives a much better looking side to the slab. We are assuming this base is for keeps so you want it to look good as well as being completely functional!

When the concrete is hard after a day or so, pull the timber up and away from the base.

Keeping the polythene held up, lay two courses of bricks around the base. Lay the top course of bricks with any frog (brick indent) facing down so that you have a nice flat top. When these are laid, cut off any surplus polythene just below the top of slab/bricks. Then push plenty of mortar (soft sand and cement mixed at 4 to 1) into the joint between bricks and slab.

Point up the brickwork and you have a good-looking base for your shed.