



TIMBER HOME LIVING

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Timber Frame House Plans: 10 Steps to Perfection

How do timber-frame house plans come into being? A methodical approach works best. Follow our 10-step plan to get the perfect design.

#1- Chart Your Lifestyle.

Consider the makeup of your family (adults only, adults and kids, aging parents), how you live (formal or casual, hectic or relaxed) and if you like to entertain or have special hobbies. A lifestyle outline will tell you how you feel about your timber home and help you develop the basic [timber-frame house plan](#). For example, a casual couple won't need a formal entry or dining room, whereas high-octane families should consider cozy, peaceful spaces to regroup.

#2- Know Your Budget

Setting your bottom line for costs is the most important step you can take to ensure that you have enough money to see your timber frame home's construction through to the end.

#3- Size Things Up.

Bigger isn't always better. It does, however, cost more. So before you jump on the wasted-space bandwagon, make sure the number, type and size of rooms reflect what will take place within them. To do this, think of your rooms in terms of activities. For example, instead of "kitchen" and "living room," think "cooking" and "family time."

#4- Account for Extras.

Architectural components are integral to your timber-frame house, but they also tend to hog space (and cost money, so don't forget to figure them into your budget). Some popular elements: window seats, large windows, massive trusses, dormers, and hipped or gabled roofs.

Organize your list of activities into a timber house based on how you'll use each room. Start by breaking down your list into private and communal activities and where in the timber house each one should take place. Then draw a bubble diagram by grouping bubbles (rooms) according to where you want them to be positioned. Finally, square off the bubbles to create a rough timber-frame house plan, adding enough space for walls.

#5- Learn to Compromise.

Balancing size, quality and budget is essential, and unless you have unlimited resources, the reality is you can't always get everything you want. So make cuts that work for your lifestyle, whether it's shaving off square footage, minimizing special features or reducing quality (be careful with this one—there are some things you shouldn't skimp on, including windows and doors). Also consider looking into additional financial resources.

#6- Show, Don't Tell.

Convey your ideas to your timber-framing designer and builder with a notebook of clippings (or scans burned to a CD) of timber homes and features that speak to you. This will give the timber professionals an idea of what you want your timber home to look like and an indication of the quality you expect.

#7- Site Your Timber Home.

Take note of the advantages and challenges of your building site, including geography, topography, vegetation, climate, sun and wind exposure, views and sounds. Then determine how these factors will affect each room. Also think about how your home impacts the beauty of the site, and consider leaving the best attributes untouched so you can enjoy them.

#8- Visualize Your Timber-Frame House.

Imagine yourself living in each room of your timber home. How will it look and feel? What will you see in front, behind, above and below? What sounds will you hear?

#9- Choose Your Style.

The beauty of a timber-frame house is that it can be built in virtually any style. Be sure to think through how you want the interior and exterior to look before you design the first room.

#10- Stay Focused.

Professional guidance and recommendations are crucial throughout the entire **timber-frame construction** process. But, remember, this is your timber home, so make sure you discuss every suggestion thoroughly, and don't be afraid to get a second opinion if you have concerns. Also, you want to work with someone who's excited about your timber-frame plan and not trying to make a statement of his own, or worse, make his job easier.