

# The Balcony Beckons

With the right outdoor furniture and a dash of creativity your balcony or patio can sizzle away in style this summer. **FAREEDA KANGA** shows you how.



No longer considered a wasted space, the balcony is seen as a prominent space in the design space of a home. The growing trend in interiors is to embrace the outdoors as part of our living space and actually enhance the functionality of the home by clever design, so as to allow cross ventilation and incorporate cooling breezes to ease the soaring temperatures.

A balcony, veranda or patio in today's modern homes is a boon simply because it facilitates the entry of fresh air, an open space to relax and enjoy a slice of the outdoors by merely stepping outside our living room.

Even if you have no more than a few square feet of concrete that constitutes a balcony it can be converted it a stylish outdoor retreat for family and friends by following these simple, cost-effective tips.

## >> GET FLOORED

The foundation of a balcony is the flooring. Think of how you plan to use this space then opt for the optimal flooring.

"It's a good idea to choose flooring that is skid-proof and matt in finish as water overflows or drips from potted plants and wet footwear can cause accidents and falls due to

slippery floors" says Aarti Joshi, Architect and interior designer.

Ceramic tiles especially the glazed variety are the most hardwearing and impermeable of all floor materials and ideal for this zone. Today they are available in numerous colours, shades and even shapes, for example a leading manufacturer has just introduced a



jagged edge tile for a funky unconventional look. Ceramic tiles, Vitrified tiles, Paving tiles, Designer Chequered tiles, Cement Terrazzo tiles; the list is endless. Decorative techniques on these tiles can transform them into masterpieces.

A new trend in outdoor flooring, IPE outdoor deck flooring gives the look and feel of real wood without the hassle.

"A versatile practical floor solution, it is extremely popular due to its dense and strong nature, reliability, and durability. This kind of decking is naturally resistant to decay of wood and wood damaging organisms like ants and moulds; hence it is ideal for outdoor installations. IPE makes it possible for anyone to create a small oasis of tranquillity in their own backyard, patio or terrace, without the need for complex and expensive construction work." Says Abhishek Saraf, Joint Managing Director, Square Foot, Flooring Solutions.

## >> FURNITURE FIRST

Once you have your basics in place - the fun of decorating begins! Don't over clutter your balcony with too many chairs or it will look crowded.

A few comfy cane or all-weather synthetic chairs are all that's needed. If you are in the habit of entertaining a lot then opt for the stackable variety so they don't take up too much space. "For an instant facelift add a dash of colour to lift the mood. Think of using textured pillows and cushions to enhance the space," says garden designer Urmi Shah. "Outdoor materials are no longer plastic and uncomfortable to withstand the weather." She adds

Run out of space? Don't worry; just throw a few comfy floor pillows and voila there is instant seating for all.

Another clever design trick is to add a textured outdoor rug on the floor to pull your balcony furnishings together. Essentially the rug will brighten up tiles, marble, pavers, or wood flooring, hold your colour scheme down to the ground, and create a visual centre for your outdoor room.

## >> DECORATION DO'S AND DON'TS

Balconies are more integrated with the interiors than a garden or a lawn, so you could actually decorate this space as an extension of your living room.