

Build a Footbridge

Project Level: **Intermediate**

Do you have a special retreat that doesn't seem so special anymore? If so, add a footbridge. A footbridge enhances the feeling of getting away and acts as a portal to a relaxed, carefree space where you can leave the world behind. A footbridge is a one-day project that you can complete without common tools.



Lowe's is happy to provide this information as a service to you.

Tools

- Square ⓘ
- Circular saw ⓘ
- Drill/driver ⓘ
- Drill bits ⓘ
- Tape measure ⓘ
- Gloves
- Hearing protection
- Goggles
- Dust mask

Materials

- Three, 16' 2 x 12s rated for outdoor use
- Ten, 12' 5/4 x 6 decking boards or composite deck boards
- Two, 8' 2x4s rated for outdoor use
- 2 1/2" galvanized deck screws
- Exterior stain ⓘ or Paint ⓘ



These instructions are intended solely for a decorative bridge which rests entirely on the ground. To cross an actual gap (ditch, pond, etc.) consult your local building authorities for specific instructions and requirements.

Build the Bridge

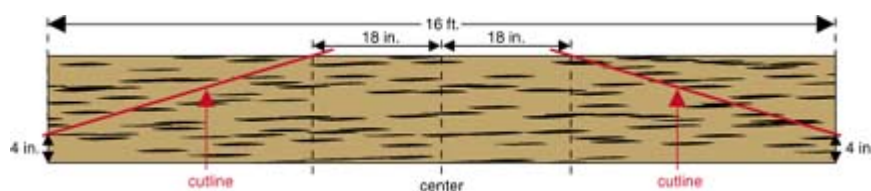
Use the following steps to construct a 16' x 3' bridge. You may, of course, change any dimensions you wish. Just remember to scale up or down accordingly. If you decide to make the bridge wider, don't allow the stringers to be more than 24" on center (OC).

Lay Out and Cut the Stringers

1. Use 16' 2x12s for the stringers. Square both ends of a

2x12 and cut it exactly 16' in length.

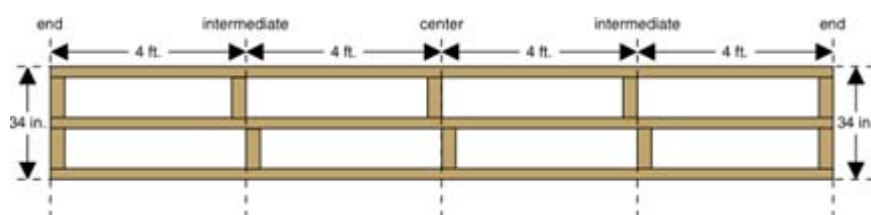
2. Measure up 4" on each end of the 2x12 and make a mark. Locate the center of the 2x12, measure 1 1/2' (18") toward the left and right ends, and mark. Draw cut-lines between the marks as shown below.
3. Use a circular saw to cut the stringer along the cut-line. Use the first stringer as a pattern to mark and cut the other stringers.



Marked stringer

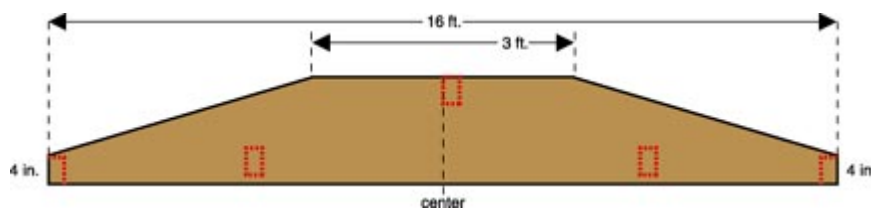
Brace the Stringers

1. Cut ten 14 3/4" pieces from your 2x4 stock. Use the pieces of 2x4 to brace the stringers. Install the center and intermediate braces staggered, as shown below.



Top view of braced stringers

2. Install the end braces flush with the bottom of the stringers, the intermediate braces 1" up from the bottom of the stringers and the center braces flush with the top of the stringers.



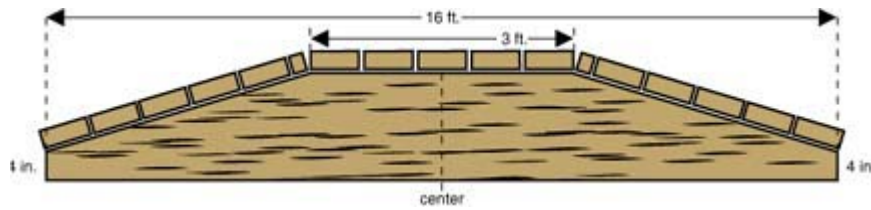
Side view of brace placement

Install the Decking



Good idea: To avoid splitting the deck boards, predrill holes for the screws.

1. Cut 5/4x6 decking boards to 36" for decking.
2. Center the decking boards on the stringer frame so there's about an inch of overhang on each side. Secure the deck boards with two screws at each stringer. Leave a 1/8" to 1/4" gap between each decking board. It may be necessary to cut decking boards to fit where the incline flattens out on the bridge. Stain and seal the bridge.



Side view of footbridge

Railings

For this bridge, we decided not to install railings. In most areas, structures under two feet high are not required to have railings, but always check with your local building inspector for requirements in your area.