

FRENCH DRAIN INSTALLATION GIUDE

*Having the right tools can be a huge time saver during your project. Gather all tools before you begin, so you can avoid unnecessary delays in your project. Here’s a tool checklist to guide you!*

**STEP 1**

**GATHER YOUR TOOLS**

**What You Need:**

* Spade
* Landscape fabric (also known as "weed halt")
* #57 Gravel
* Sand
* Sod
* String level
* String
* 2 stakes
* Tape measure

DON’T FORGET, CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

***Simply call 811 from your phone and they will ask you a series of questions to get the ball rolling. Georgia 811 will tell you when it is safe to start digging. This usually takes around 3-4 days.***



**STEP 2**

1. Determine a spot on your property where the excess water coming off the slope could be re-routed. Determining such a location may end up being a matter of choosing the lesser of two evils. If water is currently spilling out at your [house foundation](http://landscaping.about.com/od/galleryoflandscapephotos/ss/pictures-of-foundation-plantings.htm) and excessive moisture threatens to damage it, obviously almost any other spot would be preferable. The ideal French drain leach field would be an out-of-the-way area with sandy soil, through which the water could percolate harmlessly.
2. Locate the best area for a French drain. Find an area along the slope on your side of the [property line](http://landscaping.about.com/od/gainingprivacy/tp/landscaping-property-borders.htm) where excavation would be easiest and clear of obstructions). Trench lines should be planned out before you begin digging. You need to create your own mini-slope to carry the water down to its destination. A grade of 1% (that is, a drop of 1 foot for every 100 feet in length) is often recommended. Getting the water to go where you wish is essential for improving yard drainage; the grade will facilitate your efforts.
3. Pound two stakes into the ground to mark the beginning and end of the trench. Tie a string tightly to one of the stakes, then run it over to the other stake and tie it off there, too, but loosely (for now). Attach a string level to the string, adjusting the string to get it level. Once it is level, tighten the string at the second stake. Make sure the string is taut. Now begin digging the trench. As you dig, you will be able to measure down from the string to make sure that you are achieving the desired [grade](http://landscaping.about.com/od/sitegradingdrainage/f/land_grading.htm).

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PLANNING

**STEP 3**

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INSTALLING YOUR DRAIN

1. First think about the water drainage now. You might need to adjust some soil level to make as much water as possible runs to this drain.
2. Begin digging a horizontal trench across the length of the slope. The digging is the most labor-intensive part of installing French drains. The trench will slope down toward the area where you have determined the water will be re-routed to French Drains are typically 1 foot wide x 1 foot deep.
3. Before installing gravel, lay your fabric in the trench and overlay it onto level ground above. You will use this excess late, so don’t cut it off. The landscape fabric will keep dirt out of the gravel. Gravel should stay clean, to optimize water flow. Shovel your gravel onto the landscape fabric. You should have around 6-8” of gravel at this point. Wrap the ends of the landscape fabric over the top of the gravel layer and overlap the ends
4. You now essentially have a tube of landscape fabric filled with gravel. To fill in the rest of the trench, add 4 inches of topsoil, and [lay sod](http://landscaping.about.com/od/grassgrowingtips/ht/lawn_from_sod.htm) on top. Your French drain is complete.