Building a Straight Wall Up a Slope

There are many cases where a wall is needed to retain an area that is parallel with an existing feature, like a driveway, a roadway or sidewalk. Often times these walls are also sloped themselves. So how do you build a wall that is both functional and has a uniform look?

Take for example the picture shown on the right. This wall is an AB Ashlar Blend™ patterned wall from the AB Collection, with an approximate setback of 6 degrees. The entire finished wall needed to be the same distance from the curb so the contractor could place the continuous 4 ft. (1.2 m) sidewalk parallel to both the curb and the wall.

If the wall was built without accounting for the block’s setback, the wall would move away from the curb approximately 0.8 in. (20 mm) per step up as it continued up the slope. Depending on the slope of the hill, the wall could be a considerable distance away from the curb and sidewalk by the time it reached the top of the slope. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the effects of block setback.

As you can see some additional adjustments will be needed to create the desired effect. When building an application of this type, you will want to build the wall in sections. These sections are called the Working Distance.

The adjustments needed to keep the wall straight will be determined by the grade of the slope and the length of the Working Distance. By using angled wall sections, you can step the wall up the slope and keep it parallel with the existing feature. See Figure 2 for an illustration.

With a little extra planning and some special installation techniques, you can achieve the desired look and construction your project needs. For more detailed information on step-ups and building a wall up a slope, check out the AB Landscape Walls Guide and AB Tech Sheet #3108. Talk to your local AB Representative or visit allanblock.com to download these instructions for FREE.

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Expanded Backyard Makes For A Beautiful View

Nestled in the hills of Shell Beach, California, the Allee home was in need of a backyard expansion. With a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean to the front and a hillside directly out their backdoor, the Allee family needed to add balance and outdoor living space to their yard. To get the job done, the Allee family sought help and expertise of Jeromy Frakes, owner of Frakes-Scapes and Door, the Allee family needed to add balance and outdoor living space to their yard. To get the job done, the Allee family sought help and expertise of Jeromy Frakes, owner of Frakes-Scapes and Door, the Allee family needed to add balance and outdoor living space to their yard. To get the job done, the Allee family sought help and expertise of Jeromy Frakes, owner of Frakes-Scapes and Door, the Allee family needed to add balance and outdoor living space to their yard. To get the job done, the Allee family sought help and expertise of Jeromy Frakes, owner of Frakes-Scapes and Door, the Allee family needed to add balance and outdoor living space to their yard.

Frakes was able to expand the patio, create more outdoor living space and even incorporate an upper patio area where the Allee family can now enjoy their Pacific Ocean view that had been previously only enjoyed from the front yard.

The Allee family is very pleased with their new expanded outdoor living space and are enjoying the time they can spend relaxing, socializing, and taking in the beautiful view still found in their new backyard.

Frakes suggested using the AB Europa Collection by Allan Block to create some retaining walls in the backyard. The retaining walls were to be used in the front yard.

When is Reinforcement Grid Needed?

The first step in building a strong wall is to determine if additional reinforcement is needed. To do this, you’ll need to take into account when determining how much reinforcement your wall will require. Some of these factors include:

- Type of Soil
- Slopes
- Surcharges
- Searthack

If your project site does not fit within the conditions shown in the Soil Reinforcement Chart below, your project has any special characteristics or requirements, be sure to consult a qualified local engineer.

The flexible Allan Block segmental retaining wall system is designed to work in a variety of situations. Under certain conditions, the blocks alone are not enough to provide the structural support a retaining wall project may need. Soil reinforcement increases the strength of a wall by creating a reinforced mass of soil behind the blocks. The weight of the reinforced soil mass creates a structure that is more resistant to soil pressure and surcharges.

Under certain conditions, the blocks alone are not enough to provide the structural support a retaining wall project may need. Soil reinforcement increases the strength of a wall by creating a reinforced mass of soil behind the blocks. The weight of the reinforced soil mass creates a structure that is more resistant to soil pressure and surcharges.

### What is Reinforcement Geogrid?

Reinforcement grid or geogrid is a flexible synthetic mesh that is manufactured specifically for stabilizing slopes and retaining soil. While there are many types and strengths of reinforcement grid on the market today, the Allen Block Reinforcement Grid is the best choice for building stronger landscape walls. Made of high strength polyester mesh that is coated with a black protective film, AB Reinforcement Grid is specifically designed and packaged to be used on landscape walls up to 4 ft (1.2 m) in height.

### How is AB Reinforcement Grid Installed?

Building with AB Reinforcement Grid is easy. Follow these simple guidelines and you are ready to roll!

1. Start the first layer on top of the base course.
2. Using the AB Reinforcement Grid, roll out the grid along the wall, with the edge against the front lip of the blocks.
3. Fill the hollow area formed by the blocks with soil.
4. Stand the next course of blocks on top of the AB Reinforcement Grid.
5. Pull the grid taught and compact it into the area to remove any slack.

### Use the Soil Reinforcement Chart to see if reinforcement is needed on your project. Match your wall to the conditions in the chart to find which width and the number of layers of AB Reinforcement Grid you will need.

### Need for Reinforcement Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Soil</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Layer 1</th>
<th>Layer 2</th>
<th>Layer 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Soil</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay Soil</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Clay</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>6 ft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example:**

- Using the AB Collection’s 2 ft high wall, 3 ft built in anomaly with a 1 ft clear area in front above the grid requires those layers of geogrid, 5 ft wide (1.5 m).

### Strong Walls Built Right!

### Troubleshooting Tips

- **Slopes**
  - If your project includes steep slopes, you may need to use additional reinforcement grid to ensure your wall is stable.

- **Surcharges**
  - Surcharges are loads from above the wall, such as heavy machinery or a deck. You will need to use additional reinforcement grid to ensure your wall can support these loads.

- **Type of Soil**
  - Sandy soils may require additional reinforcement grid, while clay soils may need less. Consult the Soil Reinforcement Chart for guidance.

- **Searthack**
  - Searthack is the soil directly behind the blocks. It is necessary to have a stable earthack to ensure your wall is stable. Consult the Soil Reinforcement Chart for guidance.

- **Slope**
  - The slope of the wall is important to consider when determining the need for reinforcement grid. A steeper slope may require additional reinforcement grid.

### What is Soil Reinforcement?

Soil reinforcement increases the strength of the wall by creating a reinforced mass of soil behind the blocks. The weight of the reinforced soil mass. It creates a structure that is more resistant to soil pressure and surcharges.

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- **Length of Wall**
  - The length of the wall is important to consider when determining the need for soil reinforcement. Longer walls may require additional reinforcement grid.

- **Height of Wall**
  - The height of the wall is important to consider when determining the need for soil reinforcement. Taller walls may require additional reinforcement grid.

### Inside Corners

When placing grid along curved walls, the grid should follow the back of the lip. Simply slit the grid with a utility knife and either feather out or overlap to follow the curve.

### Outside Corners

When placing grid at corners, simply lay the grid around the corner and cut it to fit with a utility knife.

### Inside Curves

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Frakes was able to expand the patio to match. The Allees really liked the AB Europa® Collection blocks also had an old world – rustic feel that would cut into the hillside to allow for a larger patio and create some retaining walls in the backyard. The retaining walls products were the ideal choice for incorporating inside and outside curves, corners, and stairs into the project. The AB Europa Collection blocks also had an old world – rustic feel that the Allees really liked. Frakes suggested using the AB Europa® Collection by Allan Block as the retaining wall products to be used in the backyard expansion. The retaining wall products were the ideal choice for incorporating inside and outside curves, corners, and stairs into the project. The AB Europa Collection blocks also had an old world – rustic feel that the Allees really liked.

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What is Reinforcement Geogrid?
Reinforcement grid or geogrid is a double thick synthetic mesh that is manufactured specifically for stabilizing slopes and retaining soil. While there are many types and strengths of reinforcement grid on the market today, the Allan Block Reinforcement Grid is the best choice for building stronger landscape walls. Made of high strength polyester mesh that is coated with a black protective film, All Reinforcement Grid® is specifically designed and packaged to be used on landscape walls up to 4 ft (1.2 m) in height.

Use the Soil Reinforcement Chart to see if reinforcement is needed on your project. Match your wall to the conditions in the chart to find which width and the number of layers of All Reinforcement Grid you need.

When is Reinforcement Grid Needed?
The first step in building a strong wall is to determine if additional reinforcement is needed. A simple test is to take into account when determining how much reinforcement your wall will require. Some of these factors include:

- Type of soil
- Slopes
- Setback

Frasier suggested using the All Europe® Collection by Allan Block to create some retaining walls in the backyard. The retaining walls with driveways above, on the last layer of geogrid, it will need to be extended back 7 ft. (2.1 m). The geogrid must be installed perpendicular to the wall (rolled out from the front of the block to the back of the excavated area).

When building with All Reinforcement Grid it is important to follow the simple guidelines and you are ready to roll:

- Start the first layer on top of the base course.
- Using the All Reinforcement Grid, roll out the grid along the wall, with the edge against the front lip of the block.
- Pull the grid taught an stake into place to remove any slack.
- Fill the hollow cores and directly behind the blocks with wall rock.
- Use the AB Reinforcement Grid to create some retaining walls in the backyard.

The Allee family is very pleased with their new expanded outdoor living space and are enjoying the time they spend relaxing, scotaling, and taking in the beautiful view from their new backyard.

How to AB Reinforcement Grid Installed?
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Working with the local Allan Block producer, Air Vol Block in San Luis Obispo, the homeowners were able to choose the perfect color for their retaining walls and interlocking paver slabs for the patio to match.

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Strong Walls - When Your Wall Needs Reinforcement

Under certain conditions, the blocks alone are not enough to provide the structural support a retaining wall project may need. Soil reinforcement increases the strength of a wall by creating a reinforced mass of soil behind the blocks. The weight of the reinforced soil mass combines the blocks for a heavier, stronger wall. Using reinforcement grid is a simple solution for creating a reinforced soil mass. It creates a structure that is more resistant to soil pressure and surcharges.

Frakes was able to expand the patio, create more outdoor living space and even incorporate an upper patio area where the Allee family can now enjoy their Pacific Ocean that had been previously enjoyed only from the front yard.

Example:
- Using the AB Reinforcement Grid from Allain Block.
- Strong Walls Built Right!
- Lock your wall in place with AB Reinforcement Grid from Allain Block.

Strong Walls Built Right!

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Take for example the picture shown on the right. This wall is an AB Ashlar Blend™ patterned wall from the AB Collection, with an approximate setback of 6 degrees. The entire finished wall needed to be the same distance from the curb so the contractor could place the curbs in 4 ft (1.2 m) sidemans parallel to both the curb and the wall.

If the wall was built without accounting for the block's setback, the wall would move away from the curb approximately 0.8 in (20 mm) per step up as it continued up the slope. Depending on the slope of the hill, the wall could be a considerable distance away from the curb and sidewalk by the time it reached the top of the slope. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the effects of block setback.

As you can see, some additional adjustments will be needed to create the desired effect. When building an application of this type, you will want to build the wall in sections. These sections are called the Working Distance.

The adjustments needed to keep the wall straight will be determined by the grade of the slope and the length of the Working Distance. By using angled wall sections, you can step the wall up the slope and keep it parallel with the existing feature. See Figure 2 for an illustration.

With a little extra planning and some special installation techniques, you can achieve the desired look and construction your project needs. For more detailed information on step-ups and building a wall up a slope, check out the AB Landscape Walls Guide and AB Tech Sheet #328. Talk to your local AB Representative or visit allanblock.com to download these instructions for FREE.

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Inside:

- Expanded Backyard Makes For a Beautiful View
- Building Strong Walls With AB Reinforcement Grid
- Straight Shoestring - Building A Straight Wall Up A Slope
- Get Ready For Spring - Useful Tools to Make Your Business Grow

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