

# Getting More Use of Your Deck and Patio

"We have a lower paved patio along with a raised deck outside the sliding doors in our family room. Last year it seemed like every time we had company, it would rain and we would become trapped in our home. What suggestions could you offer to help us gain more use out of our deck and patio area?"

by **Les Kreider**  
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**N**ot being able to use your deck and patio area to the extent you would like is a situation many people face—especially here in southeast Pennsylvania. Our society has moved from a front porch home construction to a more backyard outdoor social area. Wet or hot weather socialization becomes a variable beyond our control.

A porch roof may provide too consistent shade especially on those long winter days when we want as much sun entering our house. "Solar gain" and "free" sunlight have become more important in our lower energy use age. Air condition cools our summers but costs more each year. Heating is being provided more by passive solar gain than by actual carbon based fossil fuels like oil, gas, wood, coal, and electricity. The environment today is a collection area for waste products from these fuels. Transportation is continually increasing miles per gallon numbers, with housing following closely behind. What improvements can we get with minimal impact on the environment, wallet and the future? All this is not new, but is becoming much more urgent.

Our team at Kreider's Canvas Service works with all the available options we have knowledge of to provide you a balanced outdoor/indoor experience with minimal environmental upset. We may recommend a retractable awning for an area

if wind and rain isn't an issue. We may recommend a powdercoated structure that has excellent wind resistance, yet will provide you with the necessary weather protection you need during the warmer half of the year, without limiting your solar gain and view the other half of the year. We have been known to recommend a roof also. Our goal is to provide you with good information so you can make a wise decision that you won't regret after the first year. Often haste makes waste because each area has a different set of variables.

Based on my 46-plus years around the canvas business, I have become a student of solar solutions with good visual finish. We want a solution to both work good, and be good looking while solving most of your problems for that area. We won't create other problems.

Did you know that on one 87° summer day, a shaded area of the deck will be 87° while the solar heat gain on the deck flooring can



Kreider's has been installing awnings for over 35 years and has more than 75 years of combined experience within our team of service personnel. Professionally manufactured and installed canvas awnings for your home or business is our specialty. We are committed to exceeding the expectations of all our clients and producing a long lasting quality product.

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reach 139°. I experienced that for a fact on a deck area where we were working. By shading the deck surface the temperature dropped over 50 degrees to a more comfortable 87°. The same thing happens on interior rooms protected by awnings. When windows are shaded with awnings, studies have found a 15 to 20 degree interior temperature decrease. Most of our previous customers have experienced that savings on hot summer days. If canopies or awnings are removed over winter, then the 15 to 20 degrees works in reverse heating the room with solar gain. The combined effect from summer to winter can yield up to a 30% savings in energy use (A/C & heat combined). With the increased costs of electricity and heat, the savings from using an awning can be quickly recovered over several years.

When awnings came into large use in the 1800's to mid 1900's, there were no air conditioners. Now with the energy costs increasing awnings make more sense as you can increase your covered living area for the comfortable months, yet still get solar heat and light thru your windows and doors during the cooler, darker, winter months.

Awning material construction has changed from all cotton fabrics that faded in the sun, to durable, fade resistant fabrics constructed of acrylic with a 10 year prorated warranty.

We have also improved the seam strength from using cotton threads and chain stitch machines, to currently all threads are synthetic with some seams even being heat welded together. The world is changing and we must too. Improvement is not just a catch word but a necessary requirement. What faded or needed resewn in three to five years, now lasts 10 to 23 years with minimal maintenance.

In summary, awnings and canopies are often the best solution to a patio or deck area providing wind,



rain, and increased space while the benefit of free solar heat & light during the winter months.

would like more information, we'd be happy to hear from you. Give us a call or visit us online.

Should you have any questions or

R&A

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