

# CONCRETE SLEEPERS VS RETAINING WALL BLOCKS





There are so many options these days when deciding what products to use for your retaining wall and garden wall projects. So how do you choose which to go with? There are many factors to consider for each as some products may be better suited than others. Here we step through the various benefits you get with each option, to help you determine which product to use.

### **Advantages of Sleepers**

- Generally laid on a boundary wall for ease of installation
- Used as an alternative for tight spaces
- Streamline and strong

### **Disadvantages of Sleepers**

- Limited colour ranges and finishes
- Colours fade quickly
- Not aesthetically pleasing
- Not a DIY friendly product as they are difficult to manoeuvre, extremely heavy and can be dangerous to handle
- Limited to straight lines
- Restricted to mainly trade installations which are labour intensive and costly compared to DIY
- Overall walling costs are increased by steel posts and concrete footings
- Additional sleepers and posts are not stocked by its distributors making supply difficult or expensive on small projects
- Construction of steps is costly and impractical
- Cutting is difficult

### **Advantages of Blocks**

- Come in a huge range of colours, sizes, textures and finishes
- Easier to handle being individual blocks
- DIY friendly - easy to construct
- You can build it in your own time
- You can also create near vertical walls, terraced walls, curved walls, various heights and lengths
- Easy to make adjustments or changes to your project at any time
- Create steps easily
- Matching range of caps from bullnose to split face
- There is a block to suit any retaining wall project
- Easy to handle
- Can be used for multi-purpose projects (including seating)

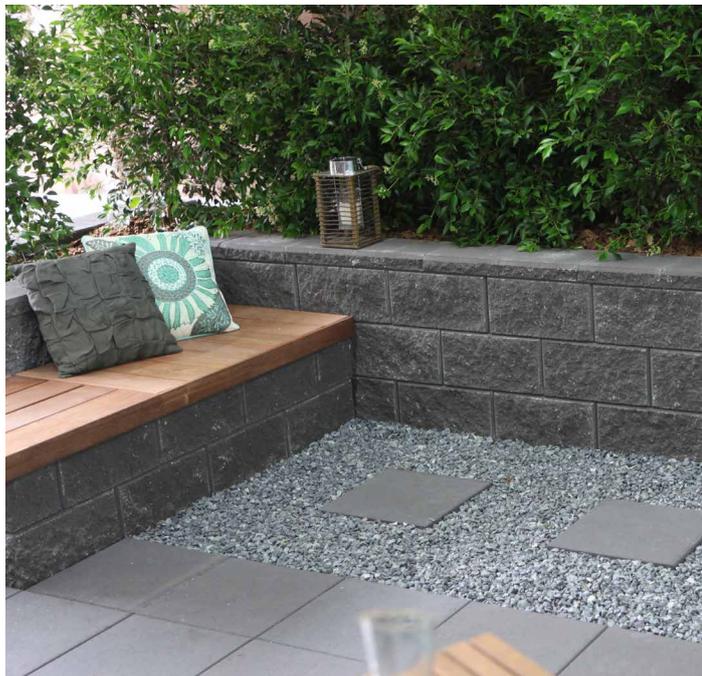
### **Disadvantages of Blocks**

- Slightly slower to construct
- Selecting the right block needs professional advice
- Different methods of construction dependant on type of block

## Handling and installation

You need to consider how you intend to handle and install concrete sleepers as they tend to be around 2 metres or more and can weigh as much as a person. Concrete sleepers and cement sleepers require multiple people to handle and install them because they are difficult and heavy to manoeuvre.

Retaining wall blocks are much easier to use, only requires one person to handle and install which makes the job easier.



## Care and maintenance

Both concrete sleepers and retaining wall blocks are relatively easy to care for and maintain. If your retaining wall becomes a little dirty, you can use a domestic high-pressure cleaner. You can also seal your retaining wall blocks by applying your sealer with a garden sprayer. Sealing your retaining wall will further help to keep them looking great.

Cleaning and sealing can restore your segmental blocks to almost new condition, even decades later.



## Cost comparison

Below is an example of a cost comparison for the total costs for a segmental block retaining wall and total costs for a concrete sleeper retaining wall, both which include all materials.

For this exercise our retaining wall is 1 metre in height and 10 metres in length the prices stated are retail prices including GST.

### RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICES

MATERIALS	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
<b>APC Textured Block:</b>			
Blocks	128	\$14.80	\$1,894.40
Caps	50	\$3.90	\$195.00
Install labour	10m <sup>2</sup>	\$225.00/m <sup>2</sup>	\$2,250.00
Aggregate	5.5ton	\$75.00/ton	\$412.50
Ag drain	10m	\$3.85/m	\$38.50
Base materials	1.5ton	\$55/ton	\$82.50
Mis materials	1	\$80.00	\$80.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$4,952.90</b>

MATERIALS	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
<b>Concrete Sleepers (Industrial 200 x 200 x 80)</b>			
Sleepers (plain)	25	\$40.20	\$1,005.00
Steel (150UB)	12m	\$32.00/m	\$384.00
Concrete	3m <sup>2</sup>	\$350.00/m <sup>2</sup>	\$1,050.00
Install labour	10m <sup>2</sup>	\$225.00/m <sup>2</sup>	\$2,250.00
Aggregate	4ton	\$75.00/m	\$300.00
Ag drain	10m	\$3.85/m	\$38.50
Mis materials	1	\$100.00	\$100.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$5,127.50</b>

*\*cost and prices indicated were sourced at the time it was written and might vary locally and are subject to change and should only be used as a guide.*

**Having a hard time finding the right tradie? APC can match the right tradie for your retaining wall project and you can request a quote on our website.**