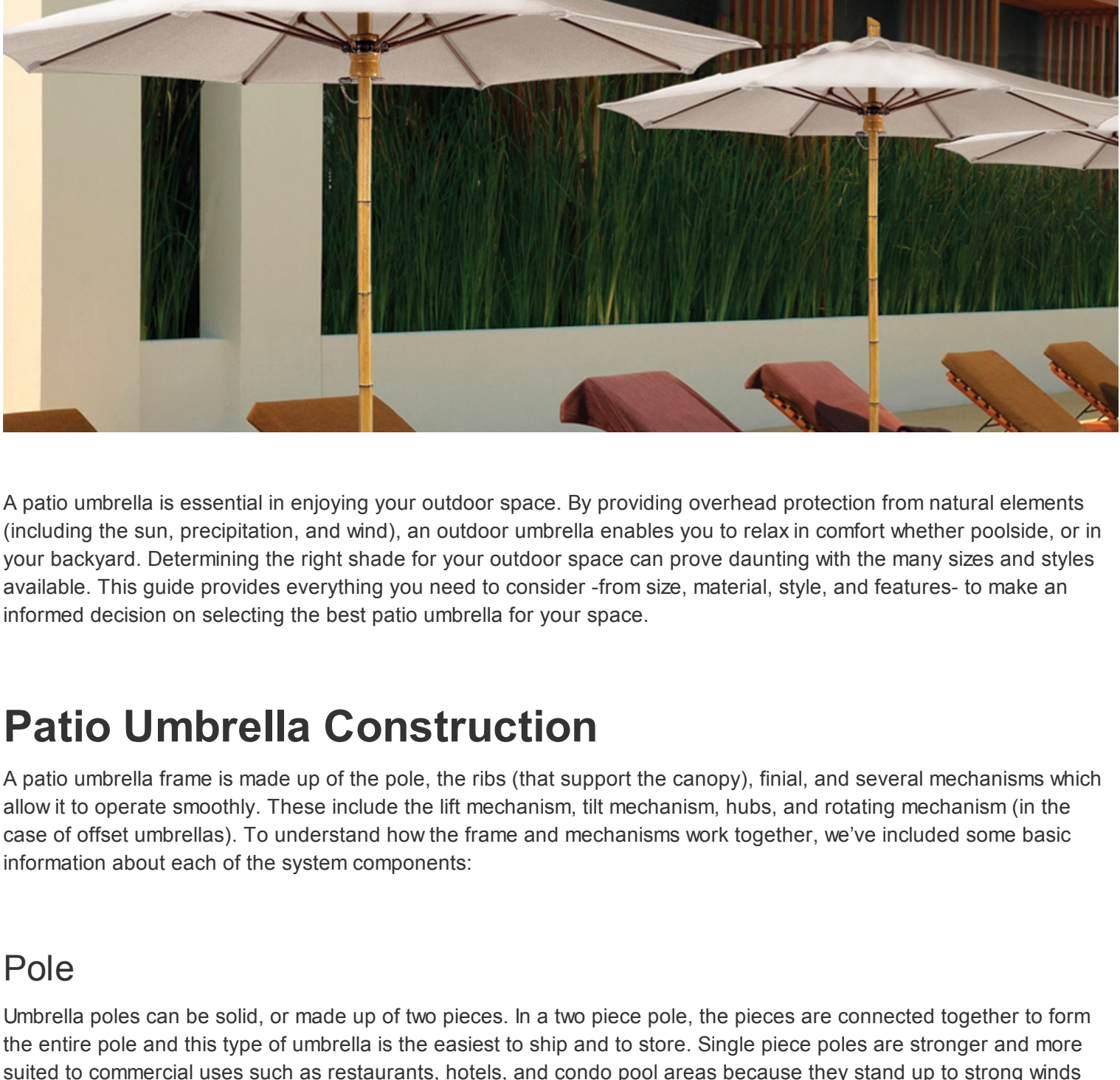


Patio Umbrella Buying Guide

A patio umbrella provides essential protection against outdoor elements like the sun and rain. Learn more about patio construction and styles



A patio umbrella is essential in enjoying your outdoor space. By providing overhead protection from natural elements (including the sun, precipitation, and wind), an outdoor umbrella enables you to relax in comfort whether poolside, or in your backyard. Determining the right shade for your outdoor space can prove daunting with the many sizes and styles available. This guide provides everything you need to consider -from size, material, style, and features- to make an informed decision on selecting the best patio umbrella for your space.

Patio Umbrella Construction

A patio umbrella frame is made up of the pole, the ribs (that support the canopy), finial, and several mechanisms which allow it to operate smoothly. These include the lift mechanism, tilt mechanism, hubs, and rotating mechanism (in the case of offset umbrellas). To understand how the frame and mechanisms work together, we've included some basic information about each of the system components:

Pole

Umbrella poles can be solid, or made up of two pieces. In a two piece pole, the pieces are connected together to form the entire pole and this type of umbrella is the easiest to ship and to store. Single piece poles are stronger and more suited to commercial uses such as restaurants, hotels, and condo pool areas because they stand up to strong winds and wind gusts better.

Ribs

The umbrella canopy is supported by ribs which are mounted on the pole. There are two kinds of ribs on patio umbrellas. The main ribs outspread from the top hub to the edges of the umbrella canopy. Main ribs are located under the canopy fabric and support the fabric panels. The support ribs are connected to both the runner hub and the main ribs and facilitate the opening and closing motion of the umbrella. The more ribs an umbrella has, the stronger and more stable the umbrella is. The strongest ribs are made from fiberglass (which usually last four to five times longer than ribs made from wood or aluminum).

Hub

There are two hubs in most patio umbrellas. The runner hub moves up and down the umbrella pole. The support ribs of the umbrella are fastened to the runner hub and facilitate the opening and closing of the umbrella. There is a top hub to which an umbrella's main ribs are attached. This top hub does not move while the main ribs rise and fall as the umbrella is opened and closed.

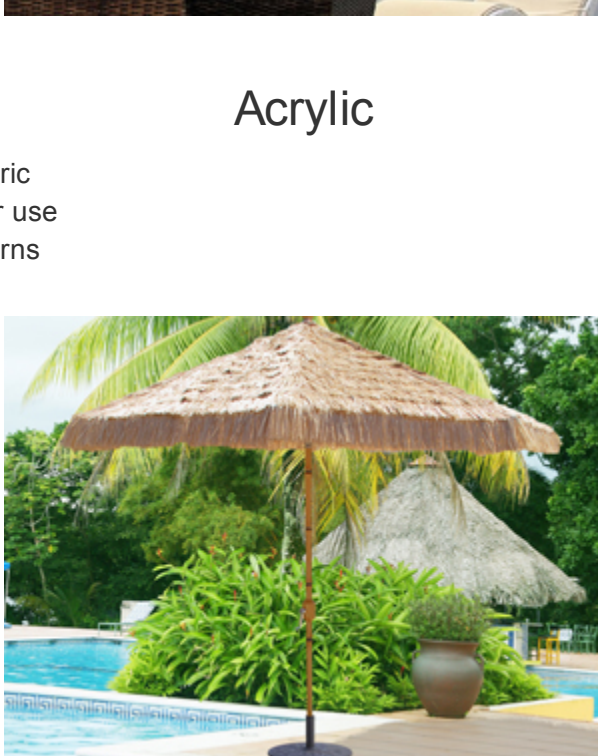
Finial

A patio umbrella finial performs two functions. It helps anchor the umbrella canopy to the frame of the umbrella. Finials are also a design element which completes the finished look for the top of the umbrella.

Patio Umbrella Materials

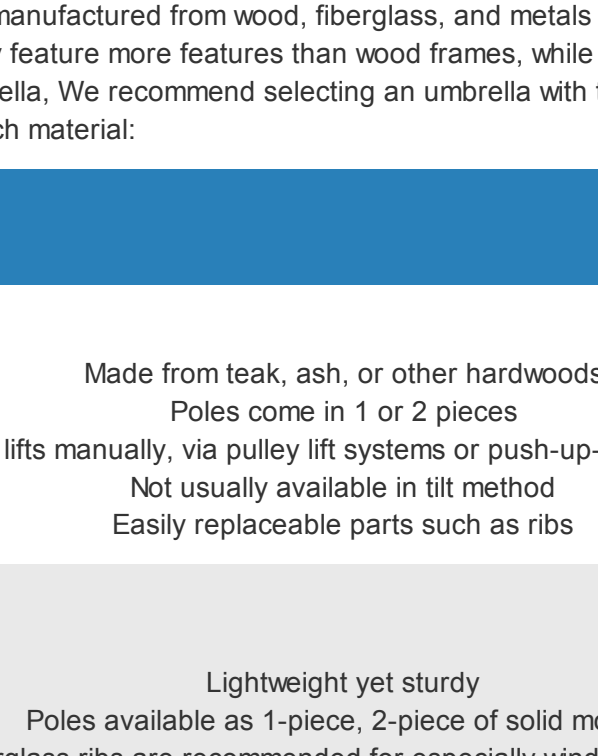
Canopy Material

The umbrella canopy adds not only aesthetic value to your outdoor space, but is the material that directly protects you from outdoor elements such as sun, wind, and rain. When it comes to outdoor textiles, each display their own set of benefits:



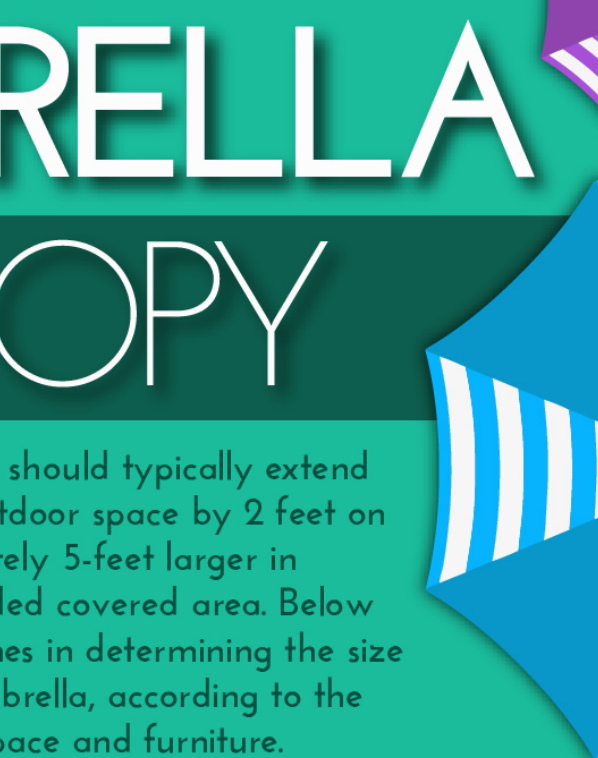
Sunbrella Fabric

- Industry leader in outdoor fabric
- Fade-proof with locked-in color that is resistant to UV-rays
- Water repellent fabric finish, resistant to mold and mildew



Olefin

- Budget-friendly fabric: high durability, excellent value
- High-density and light-weight woven fabric
- Resistant to stains and abrasions
- 1-year warranty against fading



Polyester (Pacifica, O'Bravia)

- 4-year warranty against fading, rot, and mildew
- Solution-dyed and impressive performance
- Wide selection of colors/patterns
- Quickest lead time among umbrella manufacturers



Acrylic

- Solution-dyed grade A+/A fabric
- Durable, standard for outdoor use
- Wide selection of colors/patterns



Thatch

- Consists of polypropylene strips sewn into polyester base cloth
- Provides "cooler" shade because warm air can escape through thatch material
- Resistant to rot, mildew, fading, and will not attract insects
- Fun alternative to traditional materials
- Easy to clean: hose down and air dry

Pole Material

Patio umbrella frames are typically manufactured from wood, fiberglass, and metals such as aluminum and steel. Fiberglass and metal frames usually feature more features than wood frames, while wood frames offer a natural appeal. If selecting a commercial patio umbrella, We recommend selecting an umbrella with the fewest moving parts. The following outlines the benefits of each material:

Material	Qualities
Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Made from teak, ash, or other hardwoods• Poles come in 1 or 2 pieces• Typically lifts manually, via pulley lift systems or push-up-and-pin method• Not usually available in tilt method• Easily replaceable parts such as ribs
Fiberglass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lightweight yet sturdy• Poles available as 1-piece, 2-piece of solid models• Fiberglass ribs are recommended for especially windy conditions• Stronger than aluminum or wood (lasts 4-5x longer)
Aluminum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extremely strong and durable• Rust-resistant• Most feature easy-to-operate crank lifts and tilting options• Widest selection for finishes


Patio Umbrella Measurements

UMBRELLA CANOPY

A freestanding umbrella should typically extend over your designated outdoor space by 2 feet on each side, or approximately 5-feet larger in diameter than the intended covered area. Below are some typical guidelines in determining the size of the canopy of the umbrella, according to the measurements of your space and furniture.

5-FOOT TO 6-FOOT UMBRELLA CANOPY

- Pair with 30-40 inch table or less
- Accommodates 2-4 chairs
- Ideal for bistro sets



7-FOOT UMBRELLA CANOPY

- Pair with 36-inch table or less
- Accommodates 2-4 chairs

7.5-FOOT TO 8.5-FOOT UMBRELLA CANOPY

- Pair with 36-40 inch table
- Accommodates 4-6 chairs
- Ideal for dining sets up to 6 and conversation sets

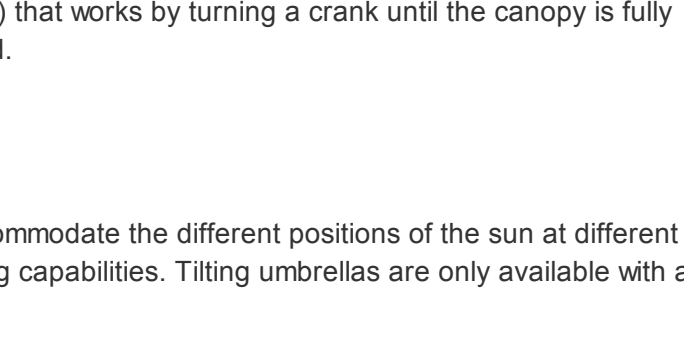


9-FOOT TO 10-FOOT UMBRELLA CANOPY

- Pair with 40-48 inch table
- Accommodates 8 chairs
- Ideal for dining sets up to 8

11-FOOT TO 13-FOOT UMBRELLA CANOPY

- Pair with 48-inch table or more
- Accommodates up to 10 chairs
- Ideal poolside, shading multiple bistro sets



UMBRELLA BASE SIZE

A weighted umbrella base is an important component of your patio umbrella that will keep it stable, sturdy, and prevent it from tipping or flying. Patio umbrellas are either freestanding, or are configured to attach with a patio table (via insertion through a center cavity in the patio table). As a general rule, the heavier the base the more sturdy the base. Use the chart below to help determine the best size umbrella base.

BASE STAND WEIGHT	40 LB	50 LB	50-70 LB	100 LB
FREESTANDING USE	5-6 FT UMBRELLA	7-9 FT UMBRELLA, LOW-WIND LOCATION	9-10 FT UMBRELLA, LOW-WIND LOCATION	10-13 FT UMBRELLA

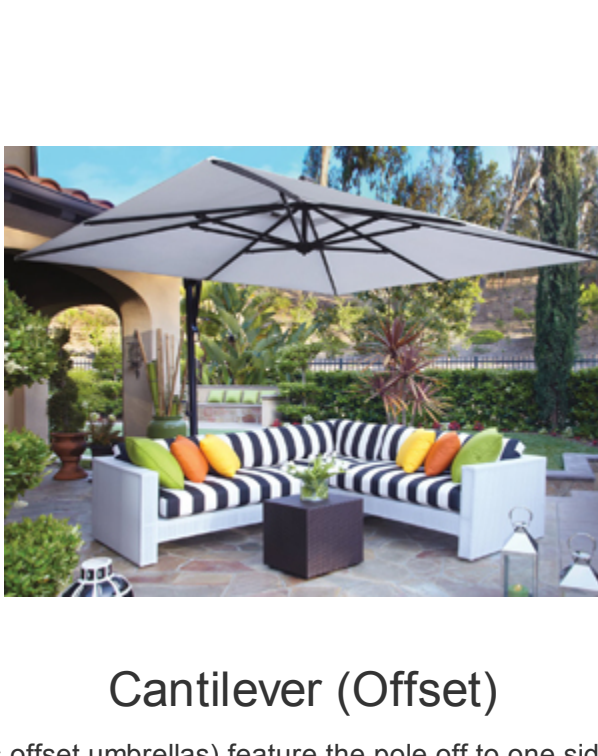
Umbrella Pole Size

The height of your umbrella is another important factor to consider when selecting the size of your umbrella. The ideal height of an umbrella allows enough clearance for taller individuals to stand upright with still enough overhead space. It should also not stand so tall that the shade does not sufficiently cover the direct space underneath. In general, your umbrella should stand at least 7 feet tall. Also, look for tilting and cantilever functions to adjust to different light levels at different times of the day.

Patio Umbrella Styles

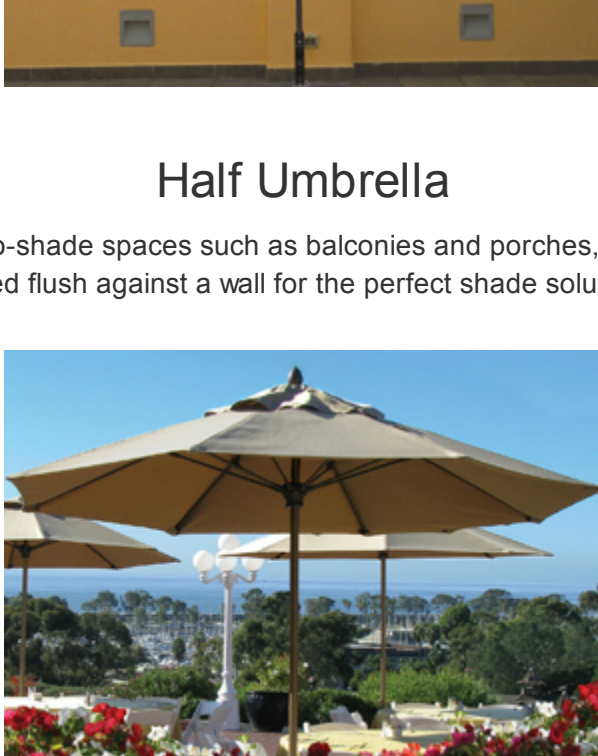
Lift Method

The term "lift" refers to the method used to open the umbrella canopy. There are 3 basic lift methods:



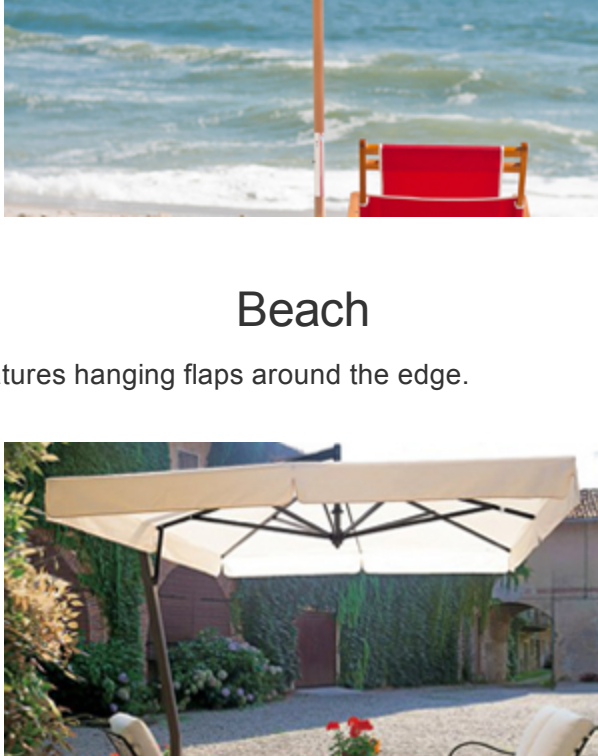
Push-Up

Push-up is a manual method of opening the umbrella canopy that operates similarly to operating a personal umbrella. The user grabs the hub and manually pushes the canopy up to the desired height, which is locked into place with a pin.



Pulley

The pulley method uses a rope to assist in raising the umbrella hub with a system of integrated cords that work to expand and open the umbrella canopy. The open shade is typically held in place with a pin.

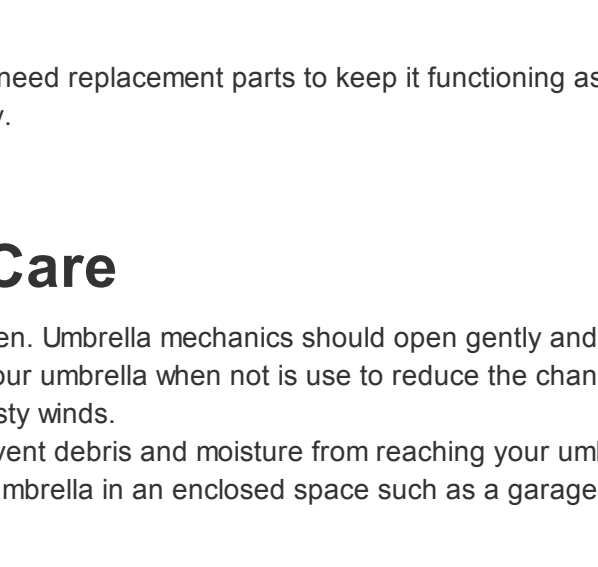


Crank

A crank is a handle (usually placed at the center of the pole) that works by turning a crank until the canopy is fully opened.

Tilt Method

Umbrellas may feature canopy shades that can be tilted to accommodate the different positions of the sun at different times of the day. A tilting mechanism enables more sun-blocking capabilities. Tiltng umbrellas are only available with a crank lift system. There are 3 styles of tilt:



Push-Button

A button allows you to tilt the canopy shade in 2 positions.

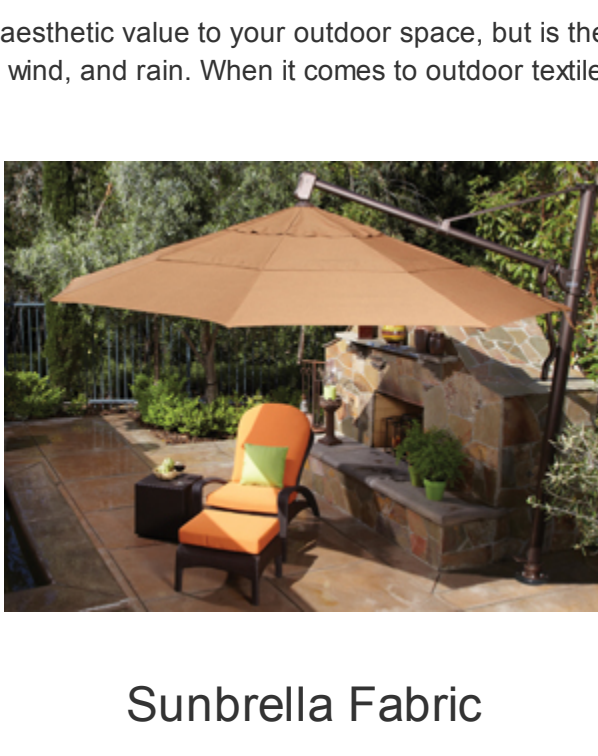
Crank

The same crank mechanism used to lift the umbrella canopy can also be utilized to pivot the canopy in different directions.

Collar

A collar, or ring, located around the hub of the umbrella can be twisted and rotated in order to tilt the canopy in different directions.

Umbrella Styles



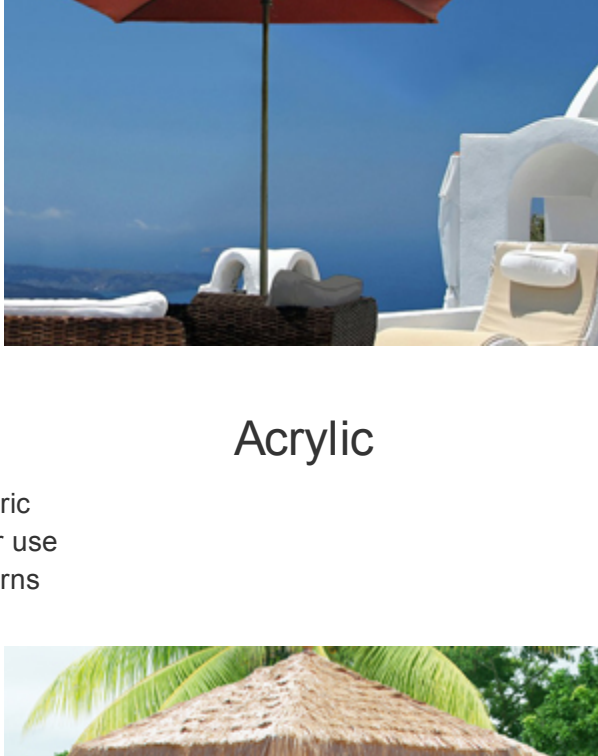
Cantilever (Offset)

Cantilever umbrellas (also known as offset umbrellas) feature the pole off to one side rather than in the center. This versatile shade solution works well over many seating areas, where a center pole would be an obstruction. Cantilever umbrellas are typically offered in larger sizes, falling within the 9-foot to 13-foot range, but can be available in smaller sizes.



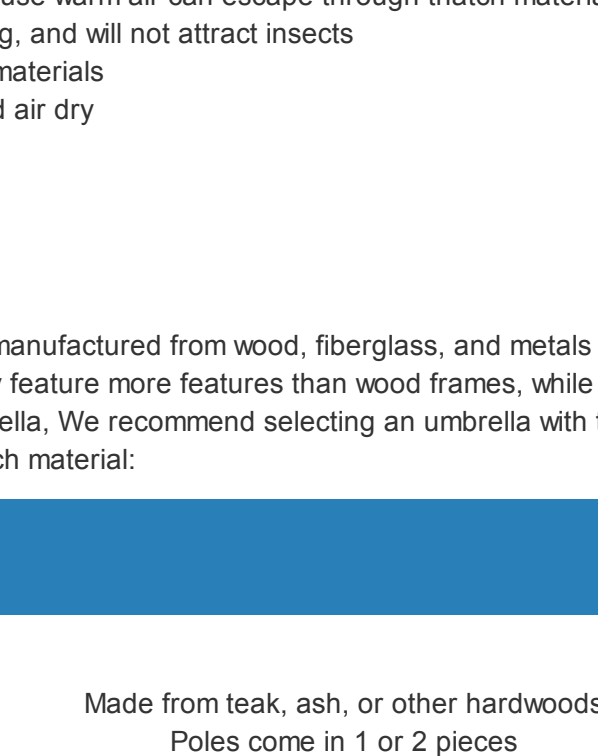
Half Umbrella

Perfect for small spaces and hard-to-shade spaces such as balconies and porches, a half umbrella features a half-canopy design that can be positioned flush against a wall for the perfect shade solution for confined settings.



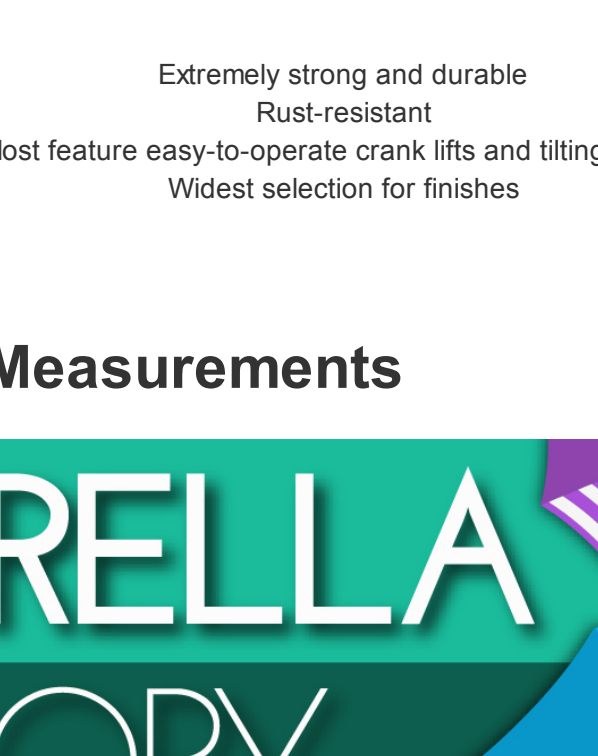
Market

A market umbrella is the most popular and common style of patio umbrella which features a clean edge canopy design with seven or eight points of ribs.



Beach

The typical beach style umbrella features hanging flaps around the edge.



Drape

Similar to the beach umbrella, the drape style features a squared-off edge with hanging flaps off the edge of each side.

Patio Umbrella Accessories

Umbrella Covers

An umbrella cover protects the umbrella when not in use. When storing your umbrella, an umbrella cover helps to keep the umbrella dust-free.

Lighting

Adding lights to your umbrella enables you to enjoy the outdoors well after the sun sets. Some patio umbrellas incorporate integrated lights into the ribs. Another option is a light attachment that is usually battery-operated that can be added to an umbrella.

Replacement Parts

After wear and tear, umbrellas may need replacement parts to keep it functioning as new. Replacement parts include a new umbrella stand, pole, or canopy.

Patio Umbrella Care

- Never force your umbrella open. Umbrella mechanics should open gently and easily.
- Always close the canopy of your umbrella when not in use to reduce the chances of breaking when exposed to outdoor elements such as gusty winds.
- Use an umbrella cover to prevent debris and moisture from reaching your umbrella.
- When not in use, store your umbrella in an enclosed space such as a garage or basement during the off-season.