

Yard Leveling Quick Guide

The five-step sequence before sod goes down

The leveling sequence

1 Grade away from the foundation

Check that the ground actually falls away from the house rather than toward it, using a string line and a level.

2 Set a consistent topsoil depth

Aim for an even layer across the whole area rather than a thick patch in one spot and a thin scrape in another.

3 Fix low spots for what they are

A small dip is a topsoil fix. A spot that keeps holding water after rain is a drainage question worth investigating separately.

4 Roll and compact

Firm the soil before the final surface pass so it does not keep settling under the turf.

5 Screen the topsoil

Pull stones, clumps and debris out of the top layer for an even surface sod can sit flush against.

Signs the job is bigger than a weekend

1 A steep drop over a short distance

Often needs retaining or terracing rather than topsoil alone.

2 Water pooling near the house or a fence line

Usually points to a drainage question, not just a surface one.

3 A large area to move and screen by hand

Worth weighing against the time and equipment involved.

4 Uncertainty reading the grade

A grading mistake is far easier to fix before sod is down than after.

Ask about ground prep the next time you get a quote.

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