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Top of Wall Finishing Guide

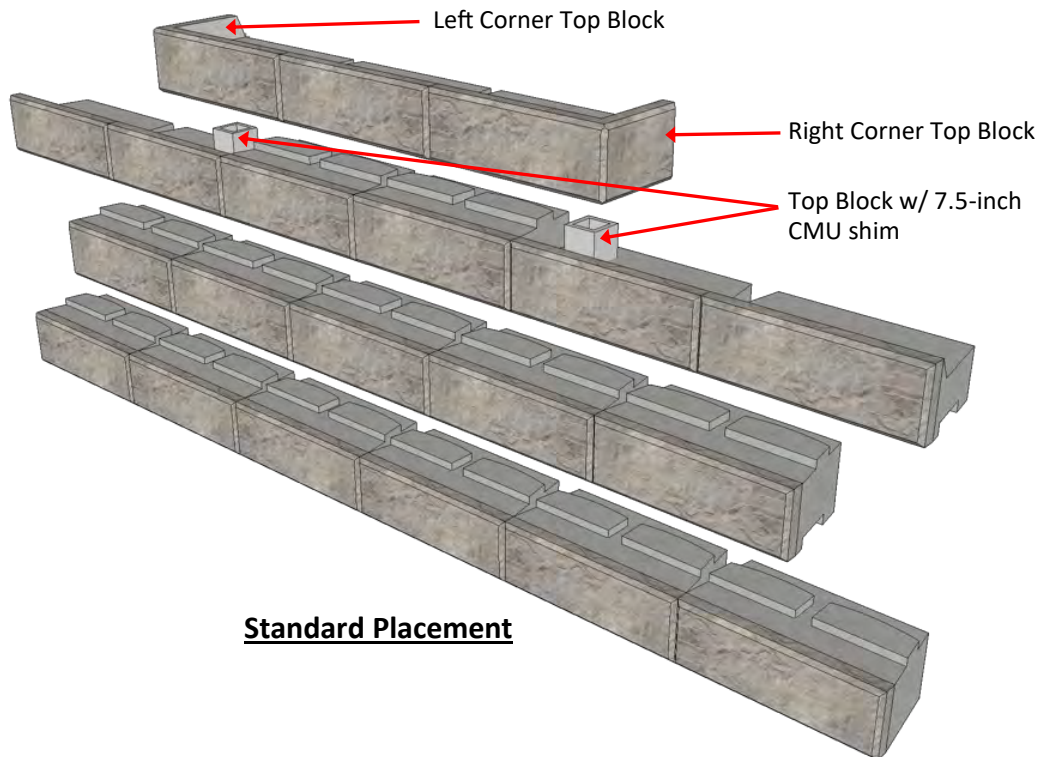


Recon Wall Systems — Top of Wall Finishing Guide

There are several options when finishing the top of a Recon retaining wall including the use of top blocks, caps, and full-high caps. Other treatments are available and typically involve special construction, such as forming and pouring a concrete parapet or attaching specialty, precast components.

Recon Top Blocks

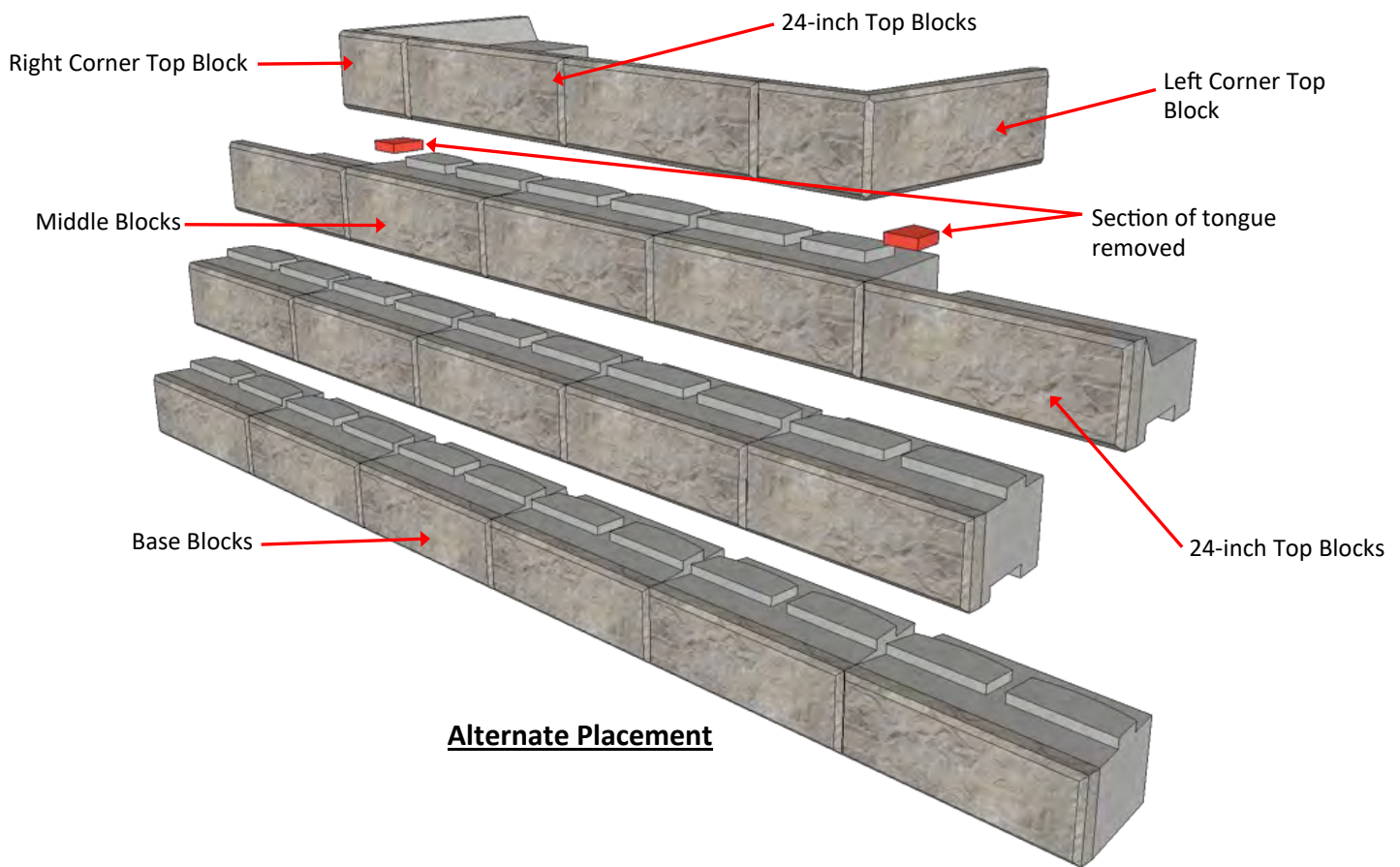
Using the Recon top blocks to finish off a wall allows for the ability to fill blocks with a landscape rock or plant material to within 4-inches of the wall face. When stepping up or down at the top of a wall using top blocks, a corner top block is used to make this transition. A corner top block can be laid with either the 2-foot or 4-foot face as the return side. Usually the wall layout elevation plan, prepared by the design engineer, will indicate the proper block location or type. In the absence of such a plan, the left and right corner top blocks designate which side the 2-foot return dimension is located as you face the finished wall. This is referred to as **standard placement**.



When the standard placement (4-foot face, 2-foot return) is used, it will be necessary for block stability to add a concrete shim beneath the portion of the corner top block that bears over the top block below. This shim is usually made or cut, if necessary, from a standard concrete masonry block (CMU). Gluing this shim in place will resist movement during the backfilling process.

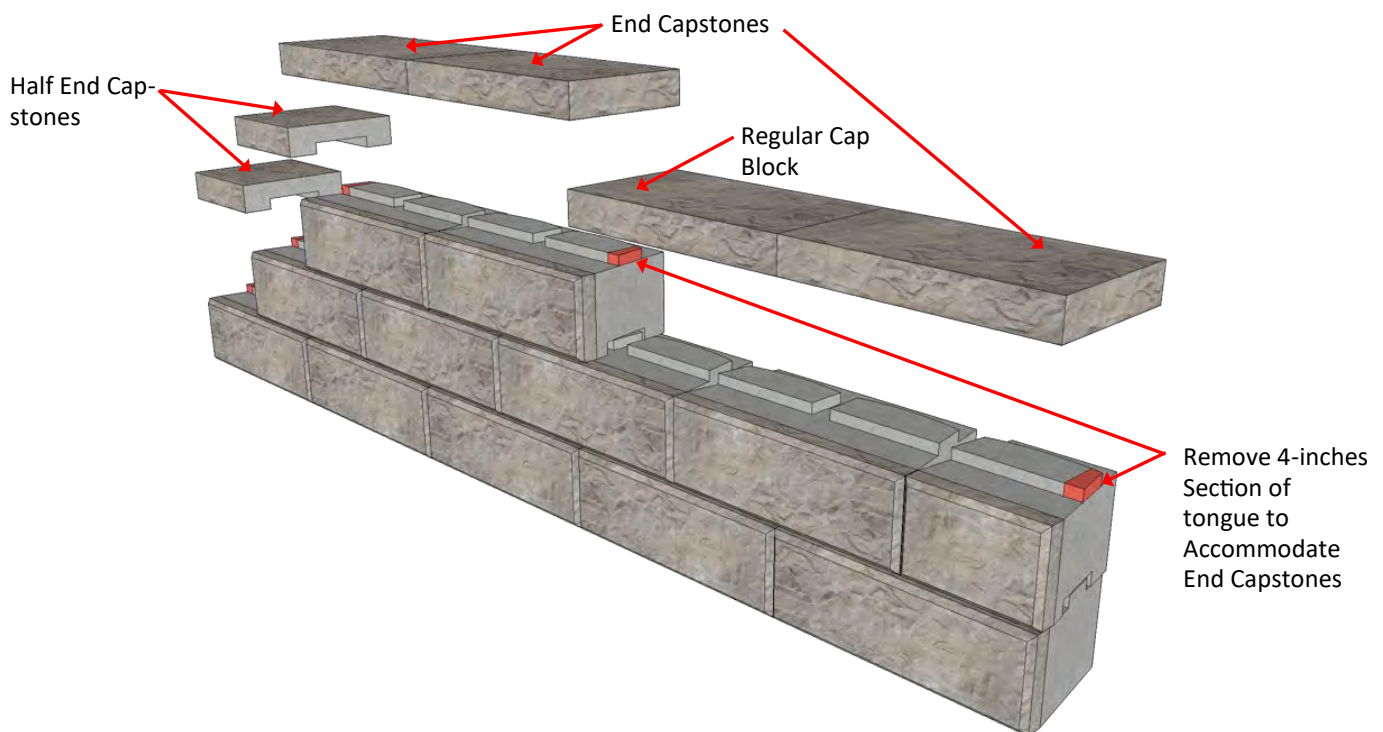
If it is desired that the 4-foot face returns into the retained soil, then a left corner top block will return (with respect to the wall face) on its right side and visa-versa for a right corner top block. This is referred to as **alternate placement** as shown in the figure on the next page.

When alternate placement is used, it will not be necessary to shim beneath the corner top blocks. In this scenario, the block will be resting entirely on half of a full block below. For the corner top block to lay flat and level, approximately 7-inches of the tongue on the lower block must be removed as shown in the figure.



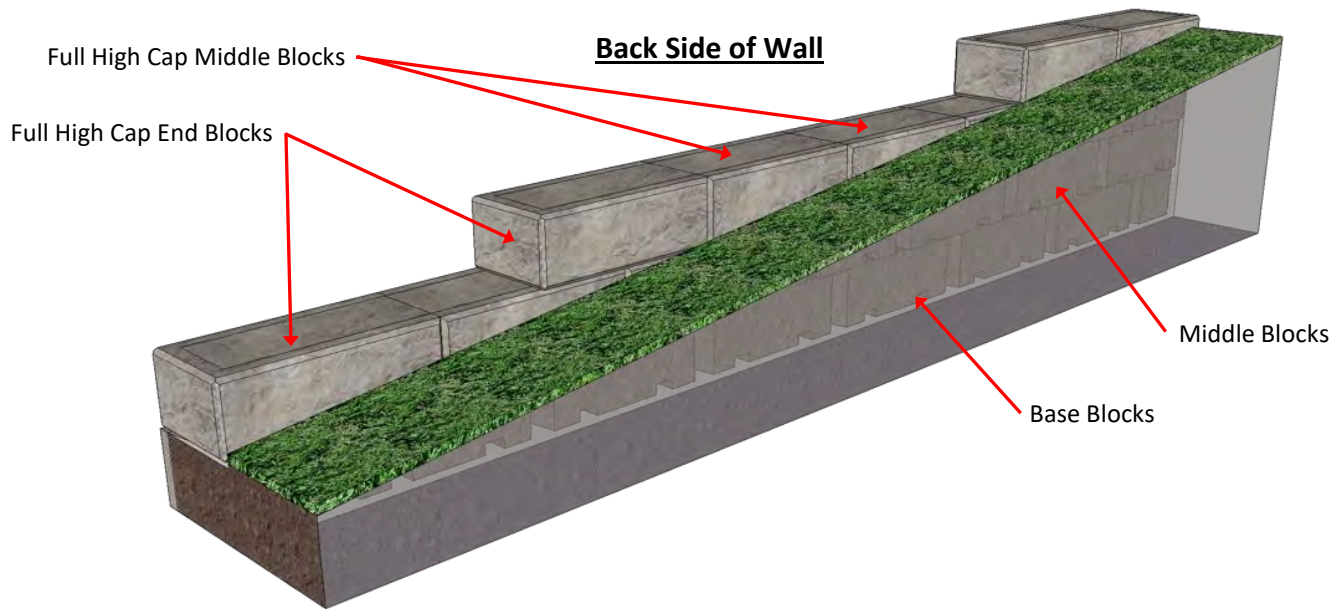
Capstones

Recon Capstones are rectangular and are available in two types, a regular cap that has a groove along the entire bottom of the block and an end cap where the groove terminates 4-inches short of the end to provide a finished end appearance. These caps are placed with a scissor clamp and are intended primarily for straight walls. If cap blocks are to be used atop curved wall sections they will need to be cut to provide a continuous finished appearance. Additional installation time must be considered when cutting cap blocks around a radius.



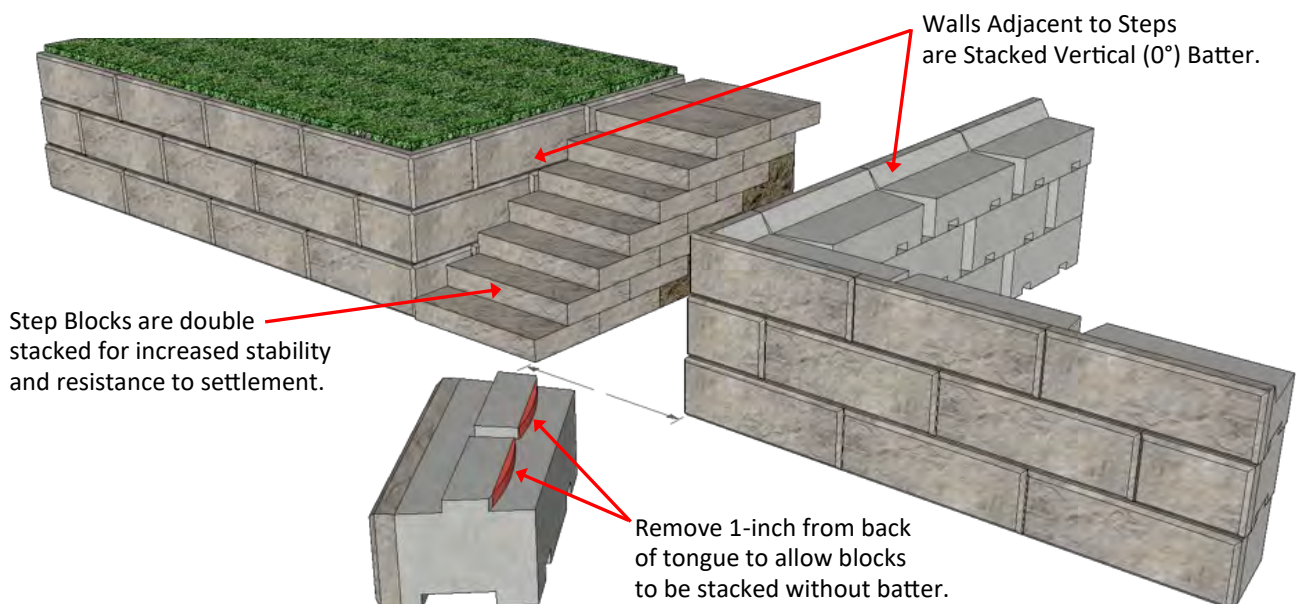
Full-High Caps

Recon Full-High Caps can be used when freeboard, above the top of wall finished grade, is required. This solution can be useful when the wall involves numerous step-ups at the top of the finished wall and a finished appearance is desired for all exposed block above grade.



Steps

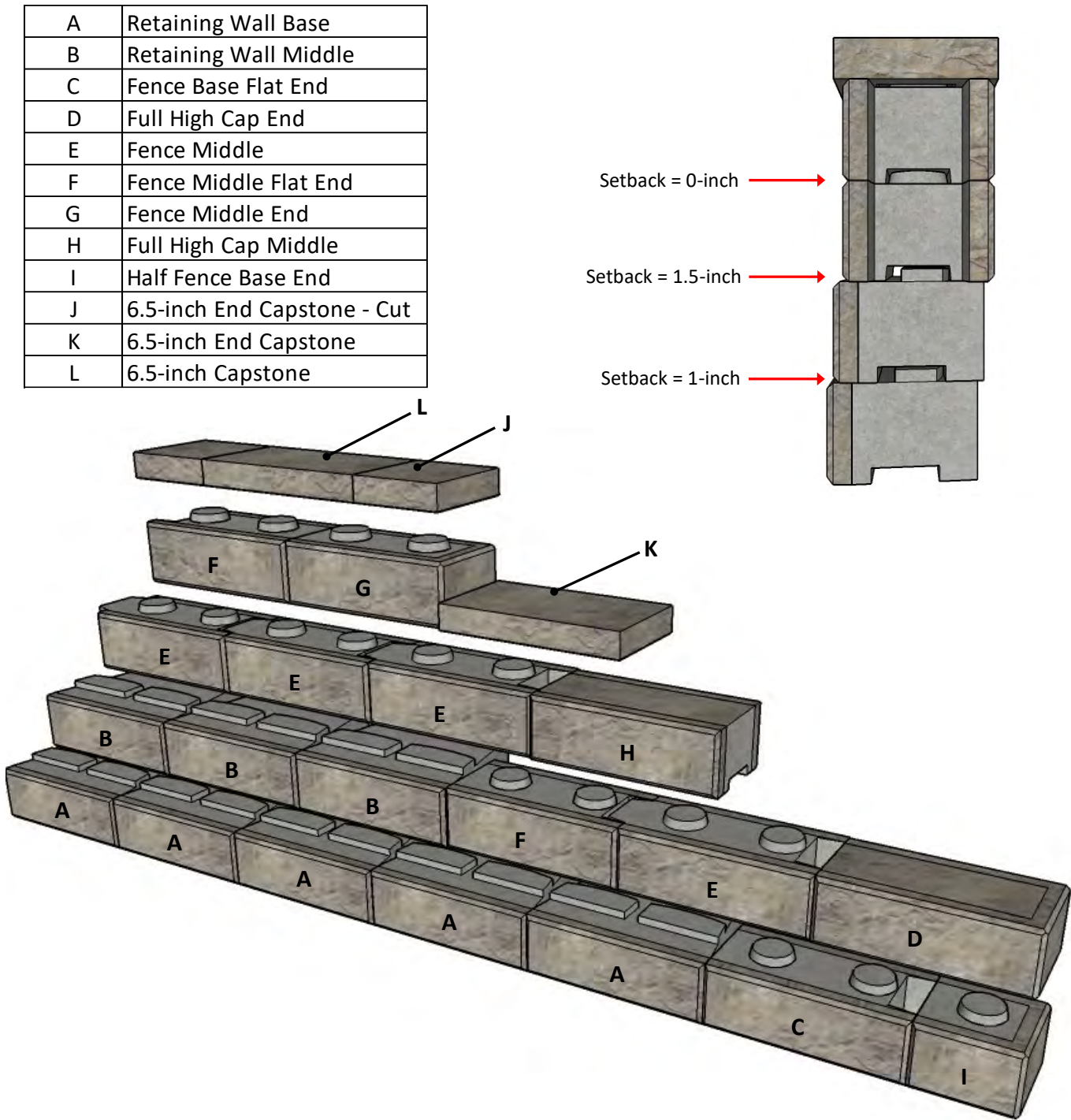
There are numerous configurations that incorporate steps into a retaining wall. The most common is where the steps begin at the base of the wall and go up through the wall to the top grade. It is important to note that when stacking steps on top of each other, the actual change in elevation from the top of the first step to the top of the second step, and so on, can be more than the 6.5-inch height of a step due to the slightly uneven texture on the top of the step, the thickness of the glue used between the steps, and some tolerance variation in the production process. If the actual finished elevation of a step or a landing within the steps is critical, it is recommended that the design assume 7-inches of rise per step (not 6.5-inches).



Freestanding Block Parapets

The construction of an integral freestanding parapets is similar to that of a Recon retaining wall in terms preparation and block placement.

For parapets on top of a Recon wall, it is important to maintain retaining wall block levelness from front-to-back as the wall is constructed. This ensures that the first freestanding course will be installed level as well.



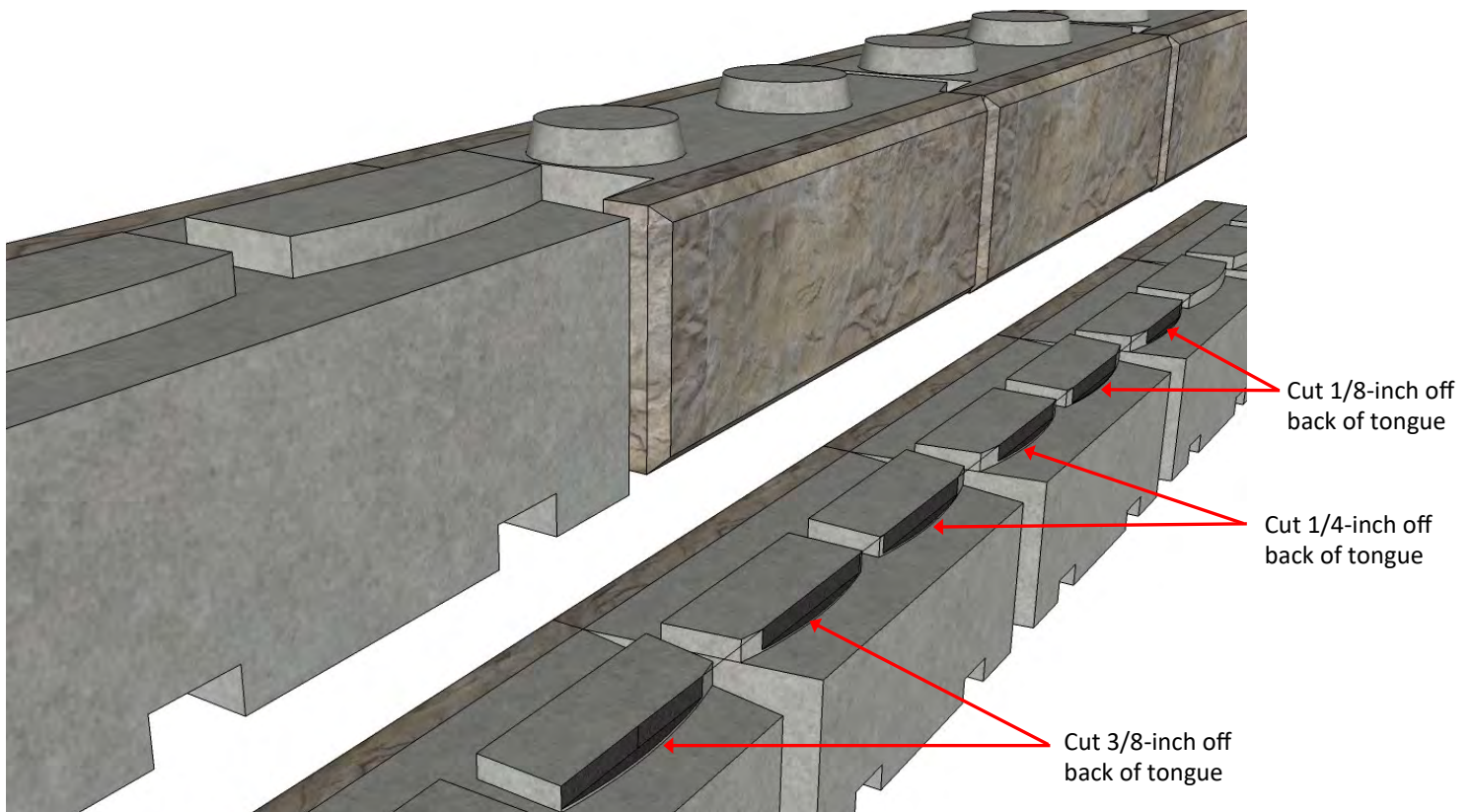
Course Transition

When the Freestanding Wall System is placed on top of a Recon wall, the initial set back in the first course between wall block and the freestanding block is 1-1/2-inches. Thereafter, any additional courses of freestanding block will go up vertically.

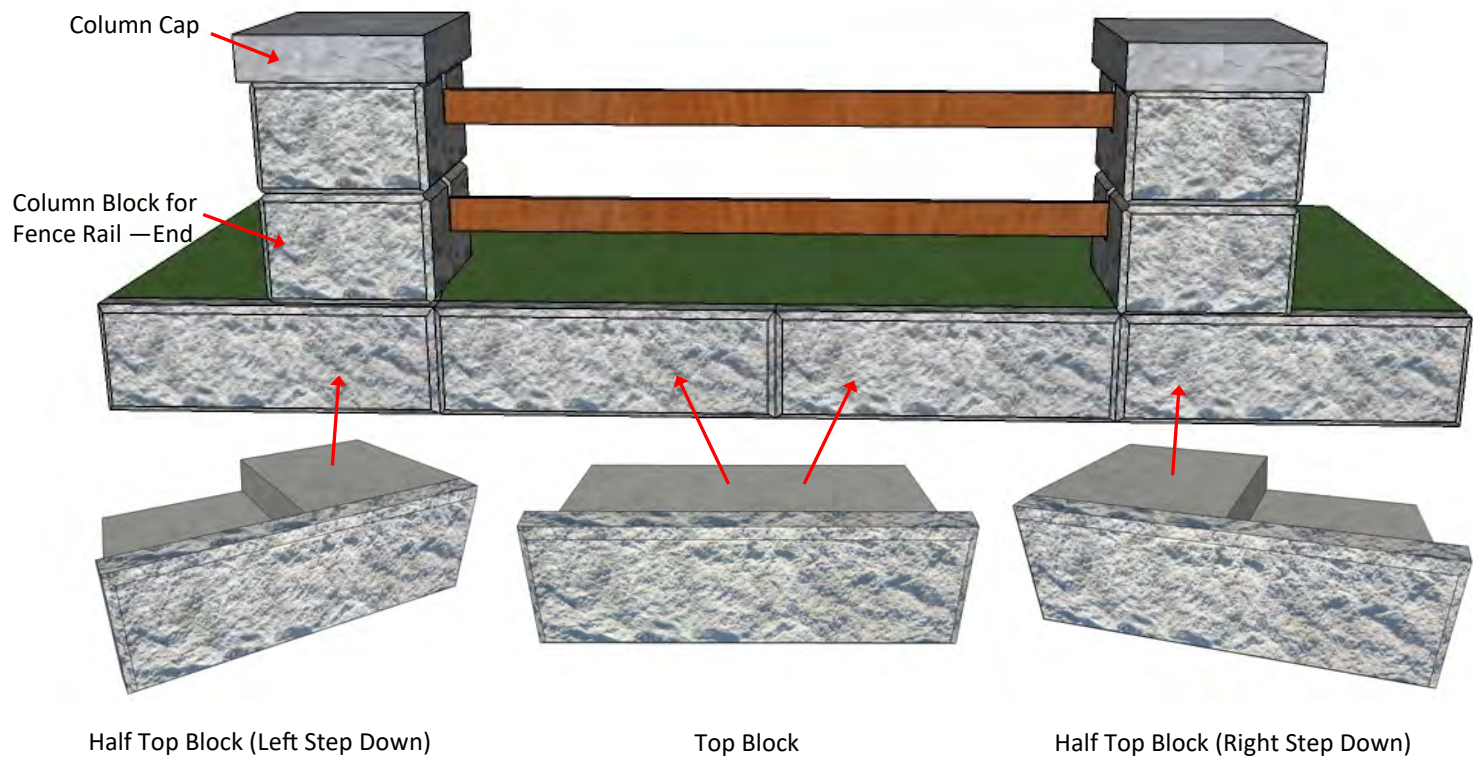
If the wall is level along the top, meaning there is no change in elevation at the top of the wall for the entire length, it is recommended that the Freestanding Wall System be placed on the retaining wall and the 1-1/2-inch setback be allowed to remain in the wall. It is not significantly noticeable, and from a design perspective it has very little effect.

Often, however, the top of a Recon wall will change in elevation. In this case, there will be locations along the wall where the same course of block transitions from retaining wall to freestanding block. When the first freestanding block is set on the top of a retaining wall block, the setback will be 1-1/2-inches, not 1-inch. This can be noticeable in the wall, and thus the contractor may want to consider transitioning the setback from 1-inch to 1-1/2-inches over a distance of three blocks or 12-feet. This can be done by cutting a small portion off the back of the tongue on the retaining wall block. The objective would be to remove 3/8-inch off the first tongue, then 1/4-inch, and finally 1/8-inch. Doing so will allow the wall setback to gradually go from 1-inch to 1-1/2-inches.

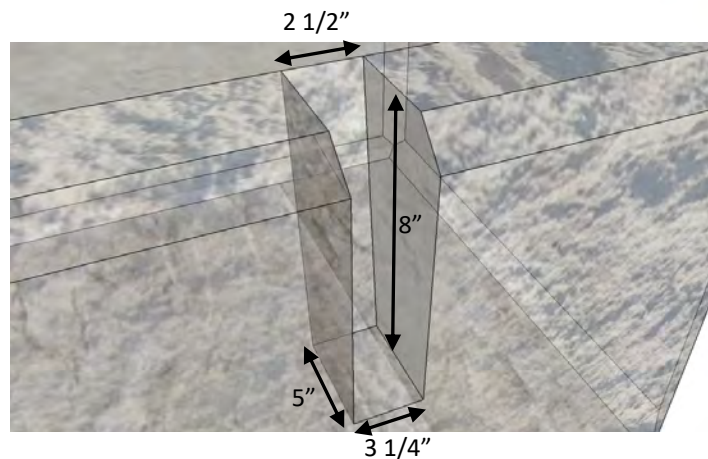
The tools needed to make this transition include a chop saw with diamond blade, a string line, a permanent marker, a hammer and a chisel. The drawing illustrates the cuts that can be made to soften the transition. Use the string line and marker to layout the cuts.



Column Block with Fence Rails

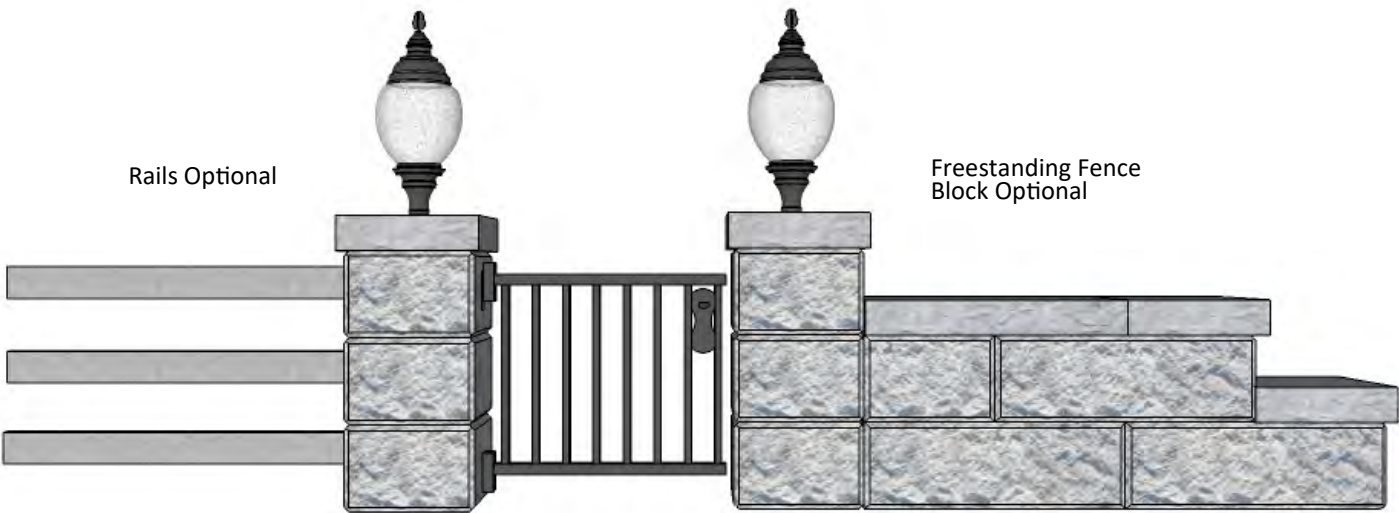


Size of Fence Rail Opening



Rail: Wood, Concrete or Plastic
2.5-inch max width
4 to 8-inch height
8-foot 6-inch or 6-foot 6-inch typical length
(Results in opening between
Columns being 8-feet or 6-feet)

Column Block with Gate



Column Block with Fence

