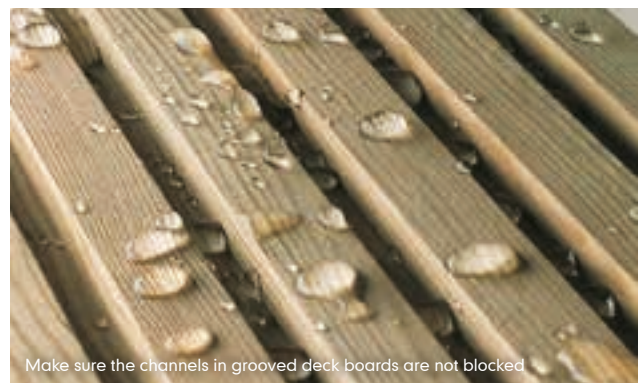




How to keep a timber deck looking good

As with any external surface, it's good practice to keep your deck in a clean condition to prevent the build up of dirt and debris. Depending upon its age and condition this may mean a simple sweep with a broom, cleaning or cleaning followed by the topical application of a surface treatment. A little annual maintenance in spring or autumn will go a long way to keeping your deck in tip top condition.



A full clean to restore a deck involves two distinct stages; cleaning followed by application of a surface treatment to make the wood weather resistant and enhance its appearance.

CLEANING

This can require a bit of effort, so roll up your sleeves and get stuck in! If you prefer, hire in professional help from a DeckMark® approved installer and sit back and relax while they do the work for you. Visit the TDCA website to find DeckMark® accredited installers.

Give the surface a really good brush with a long handled, stiff broom and scrape off any dirt or debris that is stuck to the surface. You can buy brooms specifically designed for decking. Remember, grooves in deck boards are there to help drain surface water so make sure the channels stay clear.

If the deck is just discoloured, applying a solution of household soap and good scrubbing may be all it needs. For large decks, use a power washer to clear away dirt and the effects of weathering but take care not to damage the wood – see CAUTION note.

To deal with mildew, badly faded or stained wood or grease marks from the BBQ, it is best to use a product made specifically for cleaning and restoring decks. These are generally rolled or brushed evenly over the surface and, after waiting for the specified time, the surface is scrubbed and then rinsed with clean water.

All traces of a previous paint or stain should be removed by scraping, sanding or using a product made especially for stripping coatings from wood. When using deck cleaning or stripping products always follow the manufacturer's instructions.



Strip off any old coating before redecorating the deck – you might like the look of the wood you reveal.



Before...



...and after the cleaning

CAUTION

Take care when using a pressure washer so as not to damage the surface of the deck. Don't use the lance too close to the deck surface and set the pressure to the minimum level. Alternatively, use an attachment especially designed for cleaning decks but still exercise caution and keep the head moving to avoid causing damage.

SURFACE TREATMENT

Once the deck is clean and dry a surface treatment can be applied that provides weather resistance and enhances the natural shade of the wood or gives the deck a brand new look. Surface treatments range from clear waterproofing sealers to tinted and solid stains. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.



A 15 year old deck mid its annual clean



Pressure washing can be too aggressive – use with care



Owatrol solid colour stain applied by roller

SEALERS

These penetrate the wood and contain silicone or wax additives that protect the wood against water ingress; a feature that helps to improve dimensional stability and reduce the occurrence of splits that occur when wood expands and contracts. Mouldicides and UV inhibitors are often included for added protection against mildew, algae and the greying effect of sunlight. They tend to be clear

in colour and are used to preserve the natural look of wood. Plan to reapply every year or so to keep the deck looking beautiful or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

TRANSLUCENT STAINS

These are similar to sealers but are pigmented with a colour or a wood shade. Penetrating translucent stains do not form a film, resist flaking and wear and tear from foot traffic and furniture. They are good for blending the variations in natural wood tones in new decking. The more pigmented the product, the better the resistance of the decking to fading caused by UV light from the sun. Plan to refresh them every two to three years or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

SOLID STAINS

As their name implies, these stains are more akin to paints because they hide the wood grain completely. Solid stains tend to be products that form a protective coating on the surface. Go for a product that allows the wood to breathe and is resistant to cracking and peeling. Typically, a solid stain can be expected to last up to five years but will need to be sanded or stripped when it's time to re-decorate.

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