

# Decking Maintenance

A timber or composite deck must be kept clean and maintained so that it will continue looking its best. At the very least an annual inspection and oiling of timber should be carried out for the deck to maintain its structural integrity.



## Regular Maintenance

- Clean off dirt regularly so that it doesn't scratch the decking when walked on and cause excessive wear.
- Sweep of any leaves that build up so that moisture can't build up and mould can't grow underneath them.
- If you have pot plants or other items sitting on the deck, move them around to avoid weathering in one particular spot.
- Any low overhanging trees should be cut back so that they don't encourage dampness and mould to form.

## Annual Maintenance

Note- If you have a composite deck it does not require oiling, so only steps 2 & 3 need to be followed.

Pick a cooler time of the year to carry out the oiling, a hot summer day can make the oil dry too fast on the deck and can leave unwanted marks. If you choose to stain the deck ensure that it is an oil based stain. Generally it is best to clean the deck one day and oil it the next to ensure the deck dries out adequately after being cleaned although some products can be applied to a wet deck. These are general instructions suitable for most oils but it is recommended to read the instructions from the manufacturer as well before proceeding.

1. Remove all furniture and other items off of the deck, tape up any other materials besides the decking that you don't want covered in oil. If you have delicate plants around your deck they should be protected using plastic so that they don't get damaged.
2. Visually inspect the deck including footings, posts, supporting timbers and balustrades or rails.
  - Any timber that is cracking, warping or rotting should be replaced, pay special attention to timber that is close to the ground.
  - Metal fixings that are rusting should be replaced if the rust is bad or surface rust should be removed and the metal repainted. Any loose screws should be tightened or replaced.
  - Any decking boards that are badly twisted or starting to rot need to be replaced.
  - Ensure the nails or screws holding the decking down are still secure and replace if they have started to come out.
3. Give the deck a thorough clean, remove all dirt and mould checking that the gaps between the boards are clear as well. It is recommended to do this with a product that is designed for deck cleaning.
4. Depending on the product being used you may need to give the deck a light sand to roughen up the surface from the last coat of oil. Sand back any boards that have started to splinter. Clean off any sawdust from the sanding.
5. Allow the deck to completely dry out before starting to oil. Usually best to let it dry out overnight, unless you are using a product that can be applied to wet decking.
6. Apply the oil as per the manufacturer's instructions, ensuring correct times between coats. Make sure you allow the correct curing time before placing furniture and items back onto the deck.

