



PREPARING AND MAINTAINING TIMBER DECKS IN NZ

This is a general information sheet for preparing, finishing and maintaining timber decks in NZ. This information is an accumulation of 20 years' experience dealing with Osmo products. The information does not cover every situation which may arise as that would be impractical. Osmo can labels are not written specifically for NZ timbers, but are generic for the 65 countries Osmo products are sold in.

The majority of timber decks in NZ are made from either a tropical species hardwood such as kwila, merbau and eucalypts etc or softer woods such as Pine, Douglas Fir (Oregon) and Macrocarpa. All timber contains natural ingredients such as tannins, oils and resins, which are the tree's defense against rot, mould and fungal attack. These ingredients will not allow a finishing product such as Osmo to penetrate and bind correctly with the timber. Instead, the finish will sit on top of the timber and simply burn off under the sun. Because of this, decking timbers need to weather before any finishing product is applied.

Preparing:

For new timber, we recommend allowing the timber to weather before application of any finishing product. This should be for approximately 4 - 6 weeks for softwoods, and 8 - 12 weeks for hardwoods. If in doubt, contact your local timber supplier.

Any previous film forming finish such as a varnish should be removed completely by sanding. Any barrier left on the surface will prevent the oil from penetrating the surface and it will wash off. Recycled timber should be wiped down with Osmo Brush Cleaner and Thinner, or mineral turpentine after sanding, as a precaution to remove any unseen residue in the pores of the timber left behind from previous finishes.

The moisture content of the timber should be below 18%. High levels of moisture mean the oil cannot penetrate into the timber and bind with the wood fibres.

If too much oil is applied to the timber, it will become saturated, and a film will build on the surface. This may cause the finish to "peel off" the surface – something it is not meant to do. Oil based finishes should therefore always be applied thinly and evenly along the grain. Osmo's motto is "Less is Best."

Wood which has turned grey can be treated with Osmo Wood Reviver Osmo Power-Gel before applying a finish. This is the link: www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/Wood%20Reviver%20Power%20Gel If the timber has been grey for some time (years), the Power Gel may not work and sanding will be required.

Be careful when you rinse off after applying Power Gel, as run off can damage plants. If plants or lawns are nearby, we recommend a salt-based cleaner in preference. Please allow the surface to dry for a minimum of 24 hours without rain before applying oil. The wood moisture content should be below 18%

Further recommendations:

The natural durability of various wood species is dependent on the timber's density and the amount of natural ingredients and oils which they contain. Newly installed wood should generally be allowed to weather, allowing natural ingredients and oils to wash or bleed out. Take care, as tannins etc can leave stains on surrounding areas such as pavers, concrete and other timbers etc.

Species such as Kwila and Spotted Gum should be wiped down with a solvent before any oil is applied.

Is sanding required? If so, we recommend sanding to a maximum of 80 - 120 grit. Anything finer will close the pores of the timber and prevent the oil from penetrating. The oil needs to be in the timber, not on the timber.

Finishing:

After the weathering period, and before the timber starts to grey off again, the dry surface should be finished with two coats of the appropriate Decking Oil. Osmo Decking Oils are available in a variety of natural wood tones for the most popular timber species. If you prefer a different colour tone, the Osmo Natural Oil Woodstain range is the recommended alternative, however Woodstain contains biocides.

www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/decking-oil

www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/natural-oil-woodstain

Note: A clear decking oil is not recommended for use externally in full sun and weather under NZ conditions. The strength of the UV in this country means a clear finish will only last about 2-3 months in full exposure. We recommend pigmented oils for sun protection. Generally, the more pigment an oil contains, the longer the finish will last. After the initial 2 coat application, one rejuvenation coat should be applied every 12-18 months depending on the weather and UV exposure.

Always apply the finish thinly and evenly along the wood grain. The Osmo 150 mm decking brush is the ideal applicator for decking finishes. For further ease of application the brush can be attached to Osmo's telescopic handle.

2 coats is maximum for hardwoods. Do not apply the second coat until the first coat has dried. Soft woods such as pine etc can be very absorbent and a third thin "top up" coat **may** be required if the colour looks patchy after the second coat has dried.

Osmo Anti-Slip Decking Oil adds extra grip to the surface in areas where an anti-slip component is required by your local council (such as external stairs etc). The product has been laboratory tested and meets the requirements of the NZ Building Code for flat timber surfaces. It can be applied as a topcoat over a coloured decking oil or used as a stand-alone clear finish. However, as a clear finish it will require regular on-going maintenance every 2-3 months. www.naturaloils.co.nz/product/anti-slip-decking-oil

Regular cleaning and care

Many outdoor timber decks are unprotected and exposed to high levels of UV weathering and day to day use. As such, the regular cleaning of the surface and swift repair of any damage is definitely recommended. Stubborn stains and soiling can be removed using Osmo Decking Cleaner or Power Gel if the surface has started to grey off. Damage to the finish itself (from stones, grit and dirt etc) should be cleaned and re-oiled as soon as possible. Such areas can simply be touched up or partially renovated without the need to sand. Again be careful with any "run off" when washing to avoid contact with lawns and plants etc. Heavily scratched timber may need the marks sanding out.

When should I refresh the surface?

Osmo Decking Oils will weather naturally and fade over time from the UV exposure. From 20 years' experience, the finish can last anywhere between 6 months and 2 years before recoat is needed. It all depends on the timber's exposure and the strength of the UV in your area. Regular inspection every few months will give you an idea how the timber is weathering. The time to recoat is when the colour has faded and the timber's grain is highly visible. Clean the timber, let it dry and apply one thin coat of oil.

Full information on all Osmo products can be found on our retail website: www.naturaloils.co.nz

This information is given in good faith, and to the best of our knowledge, but without liability on the part of the writer, Natural Oils Ltd, Osmo NZ Ltd or Osmo Holz und Color GmbH & Co KG. The information given is based on actual experience, laboratory testing, and product information sheets supplied by Osmo Holz und Color GmbH & Co KG.