



Refinish Your Deck

From Truevalue.com courtesy of Thompson's WaterSeal

Your deck or porch is constantly beaten on by the sun, rain and snow. This abuse causes the old finish to come off and makes the wood look old and weathered, even if it is new. After a while the wood has no protection so it starts absorbing the rain and blisters in the sun. This causes rotting and splitting of the boards that will have to be replaced. To prevent this from happening, and to revitalize the look of the wood, it is necessary to refinish the deck, which is easy to do.

Test Your Deck

How can you tell if you need to refinish? Do this simple test. Drip drops of water onto the deck or porch. If the water beads on the surface, the deck is still protected and you don't have to refinish. If any of the drops soak into the wood, it means the old finish has worn away leaving the wood unprotected. Refinishing is necessary.

If your deck or porch looks old and dirty but passed the water drop test, try cleaning it with a mild bleach solution to kill the mildew build-up. This might be all that is needed to clean and brighten your deck or porch. If this doesn't work and you really don't like the look, refinish it. Since the old finish hasn't been fully worn away, it takes longer to strip.

Materials Checklist

- Plastic tarps (to cover your plants around the deck)
- Goggles
- Rubber gloves
- Rubber boots
- Thompson's WaterSeal Deck Wash
- Hose
- Thompson's WaterSeal Semi-Transparent Stain
- Paint roller
- Roller sleeve with 3/8" nap
- Roller extension handle
- Paint tray
- Tray liner



Caution: Protect Yourself

You use chemicals to strip the deck or porch, so it is important that you protect yourself. Rubber boots or galoshes protect your feet but it is also important to protect your eyes and hands. This can be done with goggles and rubber gloves. Don't do this project if there are little kids or pets around because you have to leave the cleaner on the deck or porch for a while.

Step 1. Protect Plants

Soak any plants that are around the deck or porch with water and then cover them with plastic tarps. If you soak the plants, any deck cleaner that gets under the tarps is diluted by the water before it touches the plants.

Step 2. Strip Deck or Porch

Make sure that you are wearing the goggles, gloves and boots to protect yourself. Apply the Thompson's deck cleaner to the deck. Follow the instructions on how to apply it and how long to leave it on. Rinse off the deck cleaner with the hose. Use a lot of water and saturate the deck and the surrounding covered plants. This dilutes the deck cleaner so it won't harm the grass. Wash off the plastic tarps too. Let the deck dry and do the water test again. If the water drop beads, you have to do another round of deck cleaner. If the drop soaks into the wood, all the old finish is removed. The deck can be stained.

Step 3. Stain Deck or Porch

To apply Thompson's semi-transparent stain use a paint roller with roller sleeve. Add the extension handle so you won't have to bend down. Pour some stain into the lined tray and coat a small area. Do a small area because you want to apply the second coat while the first coat is still wet. Repeat until the entire deck is stained with two coats. Let dry.

Step 4. Easy Cleanup

Rinse the plastic tarps one more time to make sure all the deck cleaner is off. Follow the deck cleaner's instructions on how to store it. Follow the stain's instructions on how to dispose of the roller sleeve and tray liner.

Step 5. Maintain Your Deck

A new deck or porch needs to be refinished every 6 to 12 months. As it ages the finish lasts longer so you don't have to refinish as often. The best time to check the deck or porch is in the spring or fall using the water test.

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