

## Restore a wood deck

Keeping a wood deck in good shape takes a lot of work. Even if you stain or seal it, the boards can still crack and splinter, making the deck look old and worn. Switching over to composite decking is one option, though the cost may be prohibitive. But there's another, far more affordable solution. You can save your existing deck by applying a deck restoration product.

Deck restoration coatings are thick enough to fill all cracks, knot-holes and splinters, and they provide a completely new textured surface that can last as long as 13 years without additional applications. You can do the prep work in one day, then apply the product over a two-day period the following weekend. You'll need a power washer (rent it if you don't own one), a jug of deck cleaner, a special roller, masking materials and a roller extension. The cost varies, but figure roughly \$1 per sq. ft. Here's how to buy the product, prepare the surface and apply it.

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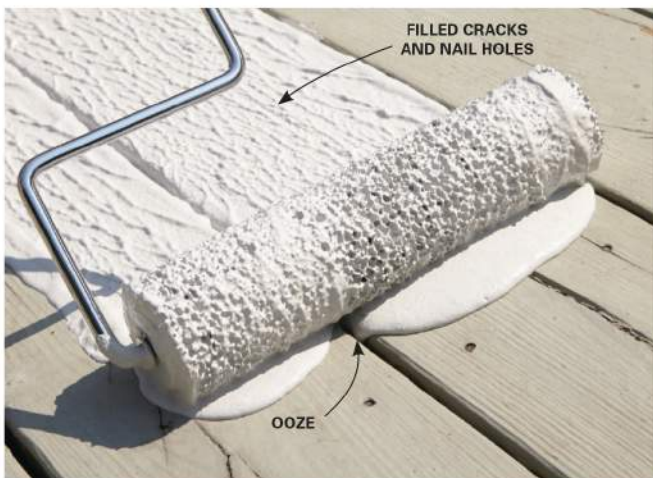
ART DIRECTION MARCIA ROECKE • PHOTOGRAPHY TOM FEENGA

THE FAMILY  
**Handyman**



### 1 PROTECT THE HOUSE AND RAILS

To avoid splattering the post rails, wrap them with masking tape and apply poly sheeting to the rails and siding. Spread poly sheeting under the deck to catch the product that oozes between the board gaps.



### 2 ROLL ON THE DECK COATING

Dunk the entire roller in the pail, place it on the deck boards and press down to form a puddle. Then roll the puddle forward to force the product into the cracks. Then lift, reload and do the next section. Don't back-roll.



### 3 COAT THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE BOARDS

Start at one end of a few boards and apply the entire length of the boards, to maintain a uniform texture. Clean the gaps as you go with a stir stick or a 5-in-1 style paint tool.

## What is a deck restoration coating?

Deck restoration coatings are made from a long-lasting tintable acrylic base material with UV inhibitors and added solids (aluminum oxide or sand). The solids provide texture and hold the product together (like aggregate in concrete). Some brands allow the wood to breathe yet repel water, while others form an impermeable barrier. The coverage ranges from 20 sq. ft. to as much as 75 sq. ft. per gallon. All brands require rigorous surface preparation. The procedures vary by manufacturer; read the product label. Apply two coats for the best performance.

## Pick the brand and get it tinted

Shop for deck restoration products at home centers and paint stores. Discuss the surface preparation requirements for each brand with the store clerks—each brand is different.

Rust-Oleum's Restore 10X, the type we used, is 10 times the thickness of paint. Restore 4X, as well as the other products, are about four times the thickness of paint. The extra thickness of 10X makes it more durable and better at covering cracks, knots and surface flaws. However, that thickness also means less coverage per gallon. If your deck is in decent shape and you'd like to save money, choose a thinner-viscosity product.

Next, choose the color carefully because deck coatings absorb a lot of heat and retain it longer than plain wood. If you pick a dark color and your deck gets direct sunlight, it may be too hot to walk on with bare feet.

Some deck restoration products (such as Restore 10X) can be used only on horizontal surfaces, so you'll need a matching or complementary product designed for the deck's vertical surfaces. And, if you're buying 4 or more gallons, buy it in pails instead of individual gallons. You won't have to refill your roller tray constantly (the product goes fast!). Before you leave the store, buy the manufacturer's recommended deck wash to ensure compatibility with the deck coating. And buy enough application rollers (one roller for every 4 gallons of material). Ask the store for extra stir sticks—you'll need them to clean the product from the gaps between boards.



### 4 FILL IN MISSED SPOTS

Dunk a brush into the pail and dribble it into missed spots or depressions to build them up.

## 5 SMOOTH WITH A BRUSH

Start at one end of the board and walk the brush down the entire length in one continuous motion. If you lift the brush, you'll leave marks.



### Prepare the surface

Start by breaking off any large splinters. Then reset any protruding nail heads or remove them and secure the boards with deck screws instead. If you've applied a solid stain or clear sealer and then covered areas of the deck with planters or furniture, those sun-shielded areas must be sanded. Use 80-grit sandpaper to remove the gloss and rough up the surface in those areas.

Next, dilute the deck cleaning product, apply it, and let it soak in for the recommended time. Then scrub the entire deck using a stiff scrub brush and extension handle. Pay extra attention to any greasy areas; get all the grease off. Then power wash the entire deck to remove ground-in dirt and loose stain. Aim the nozzle into the board gaps to clean them out too. Let the wood dry for a week before applying the restoration product.

Before applying the restoration product, let the wood dry for a week and mask off all vertical surfaces (**Photo 1**).

### Apply the first coat

Start by filling knotholes, splinters and cracks with latex caulk or the restoration product. Let it set until it's stiff. Then apply the deck coating with the special roller (**Photo 2**). You'll have to reload the roller every few feet to get the proper coating thickness. Don't try to make the product go further by working it back and forth—that'll thin it and load it with air bubbles. Coat several boards at a time (**Photo 3**). Some product will fill the gaps and some will fall through and be wasted (get over it; it's part of the cost of the job). Refill holes along the way (**Photo 4**). If you prefer a smooth finish, level the coating right away with a brush (**Photo 5**).

Clean up with soap and water and let the first coat dry for three to six hours (or until dry to the touch). You probably won't like the look of the first coat. Don't worry; it's just the primer coat. The second coat is the "magic coat" that fills in all the gaps and provides the smooth texture you saw at the store. Apply the second coat using the same method. Then let the deck dry for two full days before walking on it.

For the longest-lasting results, clean the coating in the spring and fall using the manufacturer's cleaner.

# STUFF we love

BY TRAVIS LARSON

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## DECK REMODEL IN A CAN

I had a great experience last weekend restoring the cedar bridge in our hosta garden. I took it from faded and cracked back to beautiful in one day, using Rust-Oleum's new Deck & Concrete Restore (\$30 a gallon at Home Depot).

You apply this resurfacer with a special roller sleeve, and it feels like you're rolling on liquid rubber. Because it's so thick (about the consistency of sour cream), it doesn't go far—it took an entire gallon to double-coat my 8-ft. bridge. But the result is an attractive, slip-resistant coating that should last for years.

Restore is formulated for decks and concrete, but only for foot traffic and only for rougher broom-finished surfaces. If your deck needs a face-lift, consider this product. It costs about a buck per square foot, making it a whole lot cheaper and easier than installing new decking. A word to the wise: Applying it is messy, and you have to work fast if the weather is warm. I'd suggest picking an overcast day for the job.

It's available in 50 colors, and the pigment is added and mixed at the store. (Have the staff mix it before and after the pigment is added.) Find a retailer and watch the video at [rustoleumrestore.com](http://rustoleumrestore.com).

**Travis Larson,**  
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# HANDY

PHOTOS COURTESY MANUFACTURERS

# DECK REVIVAL

## HOW TO GET STARTED REPAIRING, UPGRADING OR REPLACING YOUR DECK

/// One of the joys of summer is spending more time on your deck. With a little planning and good weather, you can while away the hours in leisure mode. But first you'll need to invest some time in caring for your deck to make it a safe, appealing outdoor-living space.

The most sensible and economical way to extend the life of your deck is to perform regular maintenance and repair and replace components as needed. When the time comes to tackle these projects, the new products outlined on the following pages may make the job easier and more satisfying. Here's a brief overview of some options to get you started on your quest for a better deck.

### **DECKING**

Wood decking offers a lot of advantages: It's attractive, relatively economical (depending on the wood) and easy to in-

stall and repair with common tools. However, it does require regular maintenance (cleaning, staining, etc.) because the elements can quickly cause wood to deteriorate. You'll find a wide variety of wood choices, including cedar, cypress, redwood, pressure-treated pine and Perennial Wood, a new type of treated wood (see SOURCES and WEB EXTRAS, p.25).

## OTHER OPTIONS

For decks that are still sound but need help to extend the life of the deck boards, check out Rust-Oleum's Deck & Concrete Restore (photo, below). This thick, durable coating isn't cheap, but it's far less expensive than replacing deck boards. And to give your deck a clean, spacious look, Azek's in-deck storage kit (photo, above) is a great way to keep cushions, umbrellas, grilling supplies, etc., out of sight.

Other deck-enhancement products include everything from trim and molding to drainage systems (to keep the space under your deck dry) and awnings. Searching online and visiting hardware stores and home-improvement centers can open your eyes to the myriad possibilities. Along with practical and financial considerations, keep in mind that your deck enhances your lifestyle. Creating a space that's highly functional and aesthetically pleasing can be every bit as important as ensuring that it's structurally sound and durable. ■

▼ To provide an extremely strong and durable deck structure, Trex Elevations is made entirely of galvanized, coated steel.



▲ Rust-Oleum's Deck & Concrete Restore is a thick coating that's formulated to extend the life of a badly weathered deck.



# DECK AND PATIO REVIVAL

SOLUTIONS FOR GIVING YOUR OUTDOOR SPACES NEW LIFE

Rust-Oleum Restore 4X

When your wood deck or concrete patio becomes old and worn (or you just crave a new look), you don't necessarily need to tear down and rebuild. It's easier and much less expensive to rescue the surface. Here's how the latest finishing products can fix common problems and give your outdoor-living spaces fresh appeal.

#### PROBLEM:

My deck is fairly new and in good shape, but I dread maintenance. I don't want to refinish it every few years.

#### SOLUTION:

##### RUST-OLEUM RESTORE 4X

Restore 4X is designed to refinish decks with little to no cosmetic problems and to provide a maintenance-free coating for many years. Easily applied with a roller, it seals hairline cracks in the wood and creates a smooth surface that feels pleasant on bare feet. Restore 4X can be custom-tinted in 60 colors.

