

5 STEPS TO TEAK FURNITURE MAINTENANCE

STEP #1: Decide on What Look You Are Going For – Honey vs. Gray

Teak furniture is a tropical hardwood that has a rich, golden honey color when new. However, as it begins to age and is exposed to the elements, the natural, beautiful color changes to a silvery gray patina that can look old and tired. Although the color change does not affect the strength and durability of the furniture, it does give your teak pieces a whole different look. Therefore, if you are going to own outdoor teak furniture you first want to decide if you want to maintain the original honey brown color or settle for the silver gray patina as it weathers. If you wish to settle for the gray look, you need do nothing further but periodic cleaning. Just let the furniture remain outside and watch it turn! If you want to maintain the new look of the honey brown, read on.

STEP #2: Protect Your New Furniture As Soon As You Buy It And Take Good Care

If you are looking to maintain the new look of your newly purchased teak furniture, make sure you seal it as soon as you get it home. Hardly any newly purchased teak furniture comes sealed from the factory anymore, so you'll want to protect your pieces right from the start. This is the easiest and least expensive way to get off to a good maintenance start. Once properly sealed, your new pieces should retain their original color for a good 10-12 months, depending on your specific climate conditions.

Even when properly sealed, try to minimize drips on your wood surface. Candle wax, oils, food stains, etc. will penetrate even the best teak sealers and leave unsightly dark marks in the wood. Use placemats when dining and coasters whenever possible for glasses and drink cups. Potted plants should not be left in the same place for too long a period of time as ring will develop where they are as well. Make sure your teak pieces do not sit on wet ground and that puddles of water are not allowed to pool on the furniture. Sprinklers should be aimed away from your furniture so that they are not constantly exposed to morning water.

STEP #3: Clean Your Furniture Periodically – BUT NEVER USE STEEL WOOL AND NEVER PRESSURE WASH!

As your furniture attracts surface dirt, you should clean your furniture as needed to ensure the surface stays clear of any harmful contaminants. Use an eco-friendly mixture of a mild laundry detergent and water and use a nylon bristle scrub brush to get in between all the slats and hard to reach places. Never use steel wool as the fragments of metal can get left in the grain of the wood and will eventually rust, leaving unsightly orange rust marks in your once gorgeous teak wood.

Make sure to rinse the teak wood thoroughly after cleaning to ensure that no detergent is left on the surface. Never use a pressure washer to clean surface dirt as you can damage the wood and/or raise the grain, leaving an unsightly finish on your once beautiful teak pieces. If you have experienced this damage in the past, a proper sanding will be the only way to remedy what was previously done.

STEP #4: Sand Your Pieces Once A Year To Restore the Surface and Properly Prepare for A Fresh Application of Sealer

Even with regular surface cleaning, your teak furniture pieces should be properly sanded once a year to revive the exterior layer of wood and prepare the wood to accept a new application of sealer. Great care should be taken when sanding as multiple grits should be used depending on the surface being sanded. A combination of hand-sanding with blocks and applicators combined with the proper use of random orbit electric sanders is the most effective and efficient way to tackle this sometimes time-consuming task.

STEP #5: When Sealing, Use Only The Best Teak-Specific Sealers Available – NEVER USE TEAK OIL!

Once your pieces have been cleaned and sanded for their annual maintenance, you will want to re-seal your pieces with the same sealer that you have previously used. Only use the best available teak sealers on your teak furniture, ones that are fully penetrating, fully translucent and ones that will hold up to the extreme sun exposure that we experience here in Southern California. While widely available in many home improvement stores, teak oil is not what you want to use to seal your teak. Teak oil is actually mislabeled Tung or linseed oil and has a tendency to attract dirt (oil is sticky), cause mildew to form and not last very long (2-3 months) before needing to be reapplied. After multiple applications, the teak oil will start to build and turn your pieces a progressively darker and darker color, nothing like you remembered when your teak pieces were new. Your teak furniture has all the natural teak oil it needs to last a lifetime – that's why it has such great durability characteristics to begin with. Don't get fooled into believing that it needs more "teak oil" as nothing could be further from the truth.

Even the so-called 'teak protectors' that are commonly branded under the teak furniture brand names are not the best choices for sealing your teak furniture. They will also tend to darken over time and attract more dirt than they ultimately repel.

What you will want to use to seal your teak pieces is a high-quality teak sealer available from a high-end Marine store or one used by a teak restoration specialist. There are good water-based and oil-based options available, with several choices of tint available as well. These sealers are not cheap but they will last considerably longer than other lesser options.

SUMMARY

Teak patio furniture is luxurious outdoor furniture intended to last for years and years. You want to make certain you take care of your investment properly as there is nothing truly like it in the world in terms of beauty and durability. With a little care, your teak furniture will virtually last forever and give you years and years of wonderful outdoor living.

If you need any help selecting the right sealer for your specific needs or with anything else regarding the maintenance steps mentioned in this article, please call our office at 800-517-9362 and we'll be more than glad to help.