



# decked out for summer

Summer's on its way; season of sun, swimming and barbecues – the best our outdoor lifestyle can offer.

So, what kind of state is the deck in? How's the patio looking after winter? Surfaces that were non-slip when dry last summer might suddenly have become a slippery slide when water or wet feet are now added to the equation, especially if there's moss or mould involved.

What should you be looking for in the condition of your patio or deck and how do you ensure they're in the best possible shape for the summer?

## general maintenance

Note: your decks and paths are not self-maintaining.

- > A major spring and autumn clean-up goes a long way towards keeping your deck looking great. Inspect for damage, hose off debris, sand off any splinters and remove barbecue or dirt stains.
- > Throughout the year, brush away fallen leaves for better air circulation, and so they won't rot and mildew.
- > If the deck is near the ground and air circulation is limited, cover the soil with polyethylene topped with decorative rock to prevent moisture damage underneath.
- > Don't stand potted plants directly on the deck.

## structural failure

Many decks sit on concrete pads, but not on concrete footings. If you're investing time and money in reworking your deck, make sure it's anchored properly to the ground and the house. Inspect any attachments for loose nails and screws or for broken parts.

## sun

Most of us are careful about personal sun protection, but the timber surfaces around your home also need protection from UV rays to stop them deteriorating and discolouring. Hot sun not only fades wood, but also dries it out, leading to water retention and rot later.

- > If your deck is dry and faded, a stain can help restore the wood's natural colour and protect it from further damage.
- > Always remove existing deck coatings before applying a stain. Any existing coating that remains will show through the new stain. A stiff brush and detergent will remove marks and rinse away stray fibres without affecting your deck's ability to soak up a new stain. If using a water blaster, be careful not to strip away the soft grain of the timber. Sand away splinters or cracks until a new layer of wood shows through.

- > After cleaning, wait two or three days to ensure the deck's completely dry before staining.
- > A tinted stain requires reapplication every two summers, as the pigments in the oil are more resistant to UV damage. Do not use a clear stain, as this will provide no protection against the sun.

#### water

Water is a deck's worst enemy, filtering into weak spots like exposed edges, nail or screw holes, splits, knots, and cracks. Unprotected timber is prone to rot.

- > Cedar, kwila and pressure-treated pine resist rot better than other woods, but all decks will eventually show some water damage.
- > Inspect the areas around nails or screws for the first signs of rot.
- > Check the ends of boards for rot. Remove a few pieces of flooring to check the condition of the joists – rot on joists often starts on the top edges.

#### mould

Even if the wood is sound, shady decks tend to go mossy. If dirt, leaves and other detritus are left to accumulate, slippery mould and mildew can grow surprisingly fast.

- > Remove mould and moss by scrubbing with correctly diluted Resene Moss & Mould Killer.
- > To prevent further build-up, sweep the deck often, scraping any debris from between the boards.

Use a garden hose to rinse off dirt. Take care not to damage the wood if water blasting.

#### temperature changes

Winter chill and summer heat can stress the timber of your deck, causing boards to expand, contract and shift.

- > The most common sign of movement is popped-up nails. If hammering doesn't keep nails from popping back up, try replacing them with new, longer nails or deck screws.
- > Always choose corrosion-resistant fasteners for deck boards.

#### and then there are your paths and driveways

Damaged paths, drives and steps are a constant hazard, especially when wet.

- > Keep them clean and free from moss and mould.
- > A non-skid paint finish will reduce any risk of slipping.
- > Paint the front edges of steps in a light colour or white to make them easier to see in the dark.
- > Watch out for cracks, uneven sections and loose railings on steps.
- > Check for damage to asphalt and for washed-out materials on loose-fill paths.
- > Look for spalling (flaking), hairline cracks and broken areas on concrete paths. If the surface is badly settled and cracked, fill it with new concrete. Concrete patches rarely blend in with the existing path, so consider replacing a larger section to keep it looking smart. **H**

Don't forget to keep your wooden outdoor furniture looking its best. Use Resene Kwila Timber Stain to quickly rejuvenate even the most faded timber.

### from Resene for paths and decks:

- > Resene Non-Skid Deck and Path provides a comfortable walking surface, indoors or out. It is available in a low-sheen finish and can be tinted to match your internal or external colour scheme. Its comfortable grit texture gives feet and shoes something to grip on to, reducing the risk of accident.
- > Treat areas of moss or mould with Resene Moss & Mould Killer. Correctly diluted with clean water, this achieves full results in 48 hours. Regular washing with Resene Paint Prep and Housewash will also help extend the life of your paintwork.
- > For a painted finish, Resene Lumbersider is designed to work in two coats. However, a third coat will substantially improve the durability of the system, even doubling its lifetime.
- > Improve the durability of the paint job by pre-treating bare timber with Resene TimberLock.
- > For a semi-transparent stain apply two coats of Resene Woodsman oil-based wood stain, wiping away any surplus. For dressed timber, a third coat will be needed after three months. Resene Woodsman will require maintenance after two summers.