



## Restoring Your Cedar Deck

### Preparing Your Cedar Deck For Finishing

To properly prep your raw deck for finishing or restore your deck back to its original luster, you need to first remove all surface dirt and debris with a stiff bristle brush before cleaning it with a mild oxygenated bleach solution – water and OxiClean, for example, will work. It's a common household product that you can find at your local grocery and/or drug store and does wonders to brighten your wood. After you clean your deck, inspect for mildew, which needs to be removed before applying any finishing product. At which point, you can choose from a wide range of deck-specific stains and finishes or leave your restored deck unfinished, eventually turning into a beautiful silvery patina.

### Restoring Your Western Red Cedar Decking

Deck surfaces should be refinished when the Western Red Cedar starts to lose its color.

The new finish needs to penetrate into the wood. Finishing too soon leads to inadequate absorption; finishing too late means the coating may have been applied to weathered wood, which reduces the performance of finishes. The first step in refinishing a Western Red Cedar deck is to clean it (as above). After the deck surface has been cleaned and rinsed down it should be allowed to dry. The moisture content of the wood should be below 20%.

Refinishing the deck with semi-transparent stain or transparent stains and water-repellents is relatively easy as the finish can simply be reapplied using a brush, pad, or roller, as above. The stain will easily penetrate some areas of the deck surface which have become more porous after weathering. In other areas, there may be a tendency for the finish to sit on the surface of the wood. Try to prevent this occurrence by removing the excess finish with a brush. If you apply too much stain when refinishing your deck, the stain will form a film on the surface and will behave like paint requiring more extensive maintenance (stripping of the finish) in the future.

It is difficult to maintain the original natural look of Western Red Cedar exposed to the weather over a prolonged period of time. The more natural and transparent the finish, the more difficult it may be to retain the original color of the wood. Eventually, you may decide to completely strip the weathered finish from the surface of your deck and start from scratch. In this situation, you can use a heavy-duty cleaner/stripper that will remove the stain from the wood as well as discolored and weathered fibers. However, you should be aware that it is quite difficult to completely restore the cedar to its original appearance. Commercially available stain-strippers will remove oil-based stains and acrylic stains from finished Western Red Cedar. Most are supplied as ready-to-use liquids. After use, residual cleaner or stripper should be thoroughly rinsed from the wood surface and the wood should be allowed to dry before any other coating is applied.