

TEAK CARE & PRESERVATION



Teak is a beautiful and unique wood used in the manufacture of furniture and boat building accents such as decks, handrails, ladders, trim, etc. Some of its most endearing features include an outstanding grain structure, its imperviousness to rot or decay, and being virtually insect free due to the internal oily nature of the wood. Although the surface feels dry, its oily content repels water, adding another reason teak is the first choice for outdoor use. When oiled properly, the wood takes on a golden glow with an accentuated grain structure that has an appeal to just about everyone.

Some prefer to let the teak weather to a soft gray tone that blends with its surroundings while most people tend to keep it looking like new. Both approaches have merit and will not harm or degrade the wood as long as the oil is replaced periodically. Obviously, keeping the wood looking like new is a bit more work, but maintaining its natural golden beauty is the basic reason to admire this fine wood.

The UV rays in sunlight are what break down the oils in the wood, causing it to turn silver gray. Also, as the oil is depleted, the grain structure opens allowing in moisture that will eventually mildew and turn the wood much darker or even black.

Long lasting professional results can easily be accomplished by simply following a few basic steps to cleaning and applying the correct amount of teak oil.

Depending on how dirty the teak may be determines whether to use [Amazon's One-Step or Two-Step Cleaner](#). Both are "Non-Acid" formulas as opposed to the overly aggressive 2-part acid type cleaners. Along with cleaning the teak, the acid cleaners have a tendency to also eat away the light colored soft grain of the wood, leaving the darker colored grain and the overall surface with a rough, washboard effect. The only way to restore a smooth surface to the wood after this type of cleaning is by sanding.

Another questionable method used to clean teak is pressure washing, which will also very efficiently remove the soft grain leaving the dark harder grain. Some suggest using a stiff bristle brush for cleaning teak, but this too leaves the surface with the same raised grain condition with sanding being the only method of a smooth restoration. Another major reason for using "Non-Acid" cleaners is they will not harm the surrounding fiberglass or painted surfaces and will not corrode attached hardware. Therefore, teak accents can be left on the boat, eliminating the laborious job of removal.

Following the cleaner's label instructions: wet the wood, apply the cleaner and agitate slightly with a flat scrubber pad. Let the cleaner do its work for approximately 15-20 minutes while



slightly agitating several times in between. Rinse with clear water and let dry. Note the color of the wood while it is wet because at this point it looks approximately what the final color will be after oiling. However, if the color is darker than expected, repeat the cleaning process. Once dry, 24+ hours, the color will lighten and is now ready for oiling.

Should the teak have been coated with some other type of sealer, teak coating, or varnish, it must be removed before any cleaning and/or oiling can occur. MDR/Amazon's product [Strip Away](#) will safely remove just about any of these coatings, including paint. Most importantly, without Methylene Chloride, [Strip Away](#) has no odor or hazardous fumes; it can safely be used indoors or in tight quarters and will not harm fiberglass gel coat.

- **PREPARING THE WOOD FOR OIL**

As previously mentioned, and cannot be stressed enough, the teak **MUST BE TOTALLY DRY** at least 24-36 hours after the last rinsing before making any attempts of oiling. Moisture can remain in the wood just below the surface and could cause the wood to turn black when teak oil is applied. MDR/Amazon's product [TEAK PREP](#) was formulated to be used just for this problem. Prior to oiling use [TEAK PREP](#), following the instructions on the label, to help remove any moisture and cleaning chemicals left in the wood. Cleaning chemicals can create 'white spots' on the surface if not removed before oiling. [TEAK PREP](#) also helps open the wood's pores, allowing better acceptance of the oil. This product can be easily brushed or wiped onto the surface and dries in about 10-15 minutes, taking any remaining surface moisture with it. Follow the instructions on the label.

- **OILING**

The most important issues with oiling are to first to use a top quality teak oil containing Tung oil and a variety of other wood oils. Next, it is imperative to have the oil penetrate as deeply as possible into the wood which will do a better job of sealing out moisture and will keep the wood looking great for a longer period of time. Note: multiple coats of oil will penetrate deeper into the wood. A single coat of even the best quality oil may look fine for a very short period of time but soon begins to oxidize and will finally turn the wood silver-gray.

Before purchasing any teak oil it is very important to determine the preferred final color of teak. Amazon's has two color blends of oil: the lightest being [Lite 'n Easy](#), otherwise known as LE, the standard golden color [Golden Teak Oil](#) or GTO. All are basically the same quality teak oil with color being the only difference.

As previously mentioned, it is important to get the oil as deep as possible into the wood. This can be accomplished by mixing some of the remaining "[Teak Prep](#)" used in the last step with the oil in a ratio of 25% "Teak Prep" to 75% teak oil. This formulation should be used for the first two coats with the third and final coat being 100% oil.

The correct method to apply oil is by hand. wiping the wood with a rag saturated in oil with the grain, which helps 'squeegee' the oil into the wood. Let stand for approximately fifteen minutes. This allows the wood to absorb as much oil as possible. Then wipe off the excess oil with a clean DRY rag. If this step is not completed, the oil will begin to cure on the surface, becoming sticky, and may never dry properly. Wait approximately 30-45 minutes before applying the second coat of "Teak Prep"/oil mixture, following the same application procedure as with the first coat. Then apply a third coat of 100% oil the next day, making sure the wood stays dry overnight.



Three to four hours after the final coating of oil, the wood should be dry and a beautiful golden color that should last for three or more months depending on the amount of sunlight (UV rays) on the wood. Higher latitudes, such as Connecticut through Maine and Canada, allow the wood's color to last much longer than lower latitudes such as Florida or the Caribbean. Re-oiling the wood before it totally turns silver gray will eliminate the extra cleaning step, saving much time and effort.

This process may sound like a lot of work, and it is, but properly cared for, the warm beauty and integrity of teak can be enjoyed for many years to come.