

Slippery Deck Cleaning and Maintenance

Sweep leaves and debris off your deck as they accumulate, especially after coastal storms. This prevents the buildup of moisture on the wooden deck surface and the concomitant growth of mold and algae. Pry debris out from the gaps between deck boards with a putty knife. Clean off stubborn areas of mildew with a pressure washer, applied with a broad nozzle in a quick fanning motion to avoid gouging the wood.

Clean off mold and mildew if present each fall and spring by mixing 1/3 cup of powdered laundry detergent -- a detergent not containing any ammonia, which combines dangerously with bleach -- and 1 quart of bleach with 3 gallons of water. Alternatively, mix a commercial deck cleaning product. Wet-mop the mixture on the deck boards and let it sit for 15 minutes, or apply it with a pump sprayer. Scrub the deck boards with a deck scrub brush attached to a wood handle or with a stiff broom. Rinse thoroughly with a hose and allow to dry.

Apply a water-repellent preservative or stain after allowing the deck to dry for at least 48 hours. Follow the manufacturer's instructions, which typically call for simply brushing or rolling the product on the deck boards on a day without either harsh sunlight, which evaporates the product, or the threat of rain. Add mildewcide to the preservative or stain if you live in a humid or rainy area.

Paint on a marine-grade anti-slip decking product for wooden decks especially prone to becoming slippery. This product contains sand or aggregates suspended in a paint or resin, which you can apply with a paint roller with a thick-nap roller cover. Apply self-adhesive strips containing a coarse grit surface to the dried deck steps at their front edges for additional purchase on the steps.