



# HOW TO STAIN A DECK

Thinking about the process of how to stain (or restain) wood can be daunting. How many coats of stain do I need? What if the wood is weathered or peeling? Does application change if you're staining pine? What about cedar stain? At Benjamin Moore, we have you—and your deck—covered.



With [ARBORCOAT® Exterior Stains](#), specially formulated to protect wood even in extreme weather conditions, refreshing your deck and protecting it at the same time is easier than you think.

With a variety of opacities and colors, a backyard transformation is well within reach. Watch our helpful how to video or check out the step-by-step guide below to get started.



Check out this video for a helpful, step-by-step guide on how to stain your deck—and achieve great results.



## Step 1: Prep

Preparation is key to success. Here are a few scenarios to guide you.

**New/Untreated:** Some new/untreated wood may have a glossy sheen to it. This is “mill glaze,” and it occurs during lumber production. In order to achieve maximum adhesion of stain to the wood, the glaze must be “broken.”

To break the mill glaze, apply [Benjamin Moore Brighten \(317\)](#) onto the wood and scrub thoroughly. Once completely scrubbed-down, use a hose or power washer to remove the product. After letting the wood dry for a minimum of 48 hours, sand everything down with 80-grit sandpaper.

## Cont. Step #1: Prep

**Weathered Wood:** [Benjamin Moore Restore \(316\)](#) is our go-to product if your deck is looking grayed out. Use Restore with a stiff brush to clean the wood and remove any loose, dead fibers. Afterwards, rinse the deck and treat the wood with Brighten, then sand down the deck to ensure a smooth staining surface.

**Flaking/Peeling Wood:** For previously stained decks that are peeling or flaking, [Benjamin Moore Remove \(315\)](#) can help to remove old stain and uncover the healthy beams beneath. Afterwards, rinse the deck and treat the wood with Brighten, then sand down the deck to ensure a smooth staining surface.

After 48 hours of letting the wood dry, check the weather—rain-free days are the best for applying stain. If the forecast is dry for at least 36 hours, you're ready to apply!



## Step 2: Test Your Color Choice

Our ARBORCOAT samples are the ideal way to discover what opacity and wood stain colors are right for your deck. Our experts can help you with options, and even let you know how much stain to buy. Visit your local Benjamin Moore store today to purchase a sample to try before you buy.

Once you know what color and opacity you'd like to use, test the color on a spare piece of lumber and give yourself a preview of how the finished deck will look. We used [ARBORCOAT Semi-Transparent](#) in Cordovan Brown in this video.

[EXPLORE STAINS & COLORS](#)

[SEE OPTIONS](#)

## Step 3: Time to Stain (But Watch the Sun and Bring a Friend!)

Deck stain can be applied in multiple ways: the tried-and-true combo of roller and brush, or with a pad applicator if you're staining solo. Use a roller to stain large areas of wood, but make sure to go back and work the stain in with a brush, also known as back-brush technique. To prevent any lap marks or uneven streaks, back-brushing should be done with a partner.

If there are any areas where the stain dries unevenly, follow the direction of the boards and recoat them fully, a few at a time. Lap marks can also occur if the stain dries too quickly, so avoid staining in direct sunlight if you can.



## Step 4: Let It Dry

Your newly-stained deck will take about 48 hours to fully dry, so we recommend waiting a minimum of two days before opening it up to foot traffic.

**Have More Questions?** Visit your [local Benjamin Moore store](#) or contact [Customer Support](#).



## Decks

A freshly-painted deck can transform your backyard, adding color—and curb appeal—to your home.

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## ARBORCOAT® Exterior Stain

ARBORCOAT stains offer superior protection while enhancing the texture and grain of wood surfaces.

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