

How to...

Look after your teak wood boat (and other teak items)



If you are lucky enough to own a wooden boat it is probably made out of teak.

In clean air untreated teak weathers to an unattractive ash grey. However this does, to some extent, depend on where the boat is kept, as modern day air pollutants will quickly turn bare teak nearly black.

Unfortunately, scrubbing the boat will not help as it tends to leave behind an unattractive mottled look which is neither

golden nor grey.

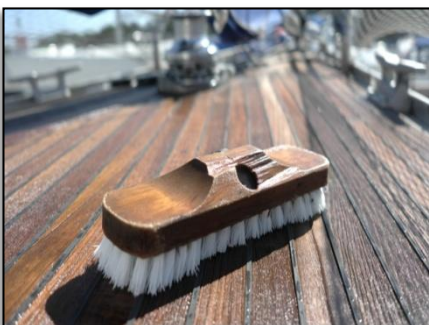
Therefore, some form of treatment is the best solution.

The use of teak oil (Product Code:N02150a) is a popular option which has been used by many boat owners for a long time.

The benefit of using teak oil is that it intensifies the colours and grain patterns of wood and gives it a rich, warm appearance. Since it simply enhances the inherent beauty of the wood it is arguably the most attractive of all the wood finishes. It also has the benefit that it actually restores some of the teak's natural oils and resins.

Please note, however, that although the teak oil is very good at recovering and maintaining the golden glow of the teak wood it does not protect it.

Applying Teak Oil



First you will need to completely clean the wood. Since teak is dissolved by strong cleaners, always use the mildest cleaner which does the job. Apply this mixture with a stiff brush, scrubbing lightly with the grain. Leave it on the wood for several minutes to give the detergent time to suspend the dirt and the bleach time



to lighten the wood, then rinse the wood thoroughly, brushing it to clear the grain.

If the teak is still dark or stained when it dries, a cleaner with oxalic acid is required (you may wish to buy a teak cleaner for this process). Wet the teak and sprinkle on the cleaner. Spread it evenly with a Scotchbrite or bronze wool pad and give it a few minutes to work. While the wood is still wet, scrub it with the Scotchbrite pad or bronze wool. Rinse the scrubbed wood thoroughly and brush as necessary. Then allow it to dry completely,

After this apply the teak oil with a paint brush. Immediately wipe up (using a spirits-dampened cloth) any drips or runs on fibreglass or painted surfaces otherwise the resins the oil contains will leave dark and almost impossible to remove stains.

Oiling requires multiple coats. Initially, the wood will 'drink' the oil so thinning the first coat by about 20% with mineral spirits or turpentine will encourage it to penetrate the wood more deeply. By the third coat the oil will start to stand in some areas. Wipe up the excess oil with a cloth. Continue to brush on the oil and wipe away any excess until the wood is saturated. The wood should have a matte finish which does not have any shiny spots.



PLEASE NOTE: NEVER use steel wool on teak wood as it will leave a trail of rust freckles which will be impossible to remove. Also, oxalic acid will dull paint and fibreglass and damage anodized aluminium, so wet down surrounding surfaces before you start and keep them free of the cleaner.

Sealer

Another approach is to apply a sealer. However, sealers do not restore the colour of the wood but simply seal out moisture and dirt and seal in natural oils and resins. Therefore, if the natural oils and resins have already been lost you will first need to restore the oil content by coating with Teak oil, as detailed above. After applying the teak oil wait at least two weeks to let the resins properly dry before applying the sealer.

After two weeks, wash the wood and let it dry completely. Sealers need an oil free surface to attach to, so wipe the wood heavily with a rag soaked in acetone to remove all oil from the surface. Do not worry the oil which the wood has absorbed will be unaffected by this quick flashing solvent. Unless the can instructs otherwise apply the sealer in exactly the same way as the oil. Remember to wipe away all excess with a cloth. Apply additional coats until the surface shows a uniform matte finish.

To maintain the sealed wood wash it and apply a fresh coat of sealer every two to three months.