

Interior Stains & Clears

There are various types of interior stains available, oil-based pigmented, solvent-based dye stain and water-based dye stains. They all allow the grain of the timber to show through. Stains are designed to be applied to raw or new timber only and all interior stains must be over coated with a clear finish to protect the colour from rubbing off due to excess handling.

Clear finishes are available in water-based, oil-based and solvent-based formulations. Most are only suitable for interior surfaces; to protect, enhance and highlight the timber being coated.

Oil-based clears will give timber a 'golden' look whereas water-based preparations will keep the timber looking natural without discolouration.

Preparation

Prior to staining/clear coating interior timbers, it is essential that all timber is clean, dry and free from contamination.

The right preparation can greatly enhance the natural grains on the timber surface and while sanding may be tedious it is an important step in preparing the surface.

Timber should be sanded smooth to allow the penetration of the stain/clear coating. If this is not carried out the product will not penetrate the timber surface creating adhesion problems. Sand out any marks, including planer ripples. Sand with the grain, starting with coarse sandpaper and working up to fine. Overfill any cracks or holes with appropriate filler then sand back levelling with the surrounding timber. Wood dust from sanding will cause problems if it is not removed properly. Ensure that the surface has been properly cleaned and free of contaminants.

Always check the colour of the stain prior to commencement to see if the colour is correct as it is difficult to remove the stain from the timber fibres once staining has been completed.

Staining

Apply one coat of stain with a rag, following the grain of the timber.

Oil-based pigmented stains

Oil-based pigmented stains are designed for use on light timbers such as Pine, Ash and Tawa. They are applied in a circular motion on larger areas or following the grain on smaller areas. Avoid applying too much stain as this can lead to excess film build and premature failure.

Solvent-based dye stains

Solvent-based dye stains are designed for harder exotic timbers. They penetrate and dye the fibres of the timber and give crisp colours allowing the natural beauty of the timber grain to show through.

Water-based gel stains

Water-based gel stains tend to be the easiest to use. They can be applied direct to vertical surfaces without the stain running down the surface, are quicker drying, low odour, have good clarity and are suitable for all timber types.

All rags used for staining must be disposed of correctly by soaking in water to neutralise any oil/solvent content present. If this is not carried out the rags can become combustible and ignite, causing fires.

Clear Coating

Polyurethane clear coatings are available in oil-based, water-based and moisture cured finishes. They are normally available in gloss, satin and matt finishes. A clear coat will enhance and protect the natural beauty and colour of the timber and protect any stained surface from excess wear. Gloss products are preferred for floors as the lower gloss levels may polish up in high traffic areas.

When clear coating Rimu, Totara and Matai timbers, avoid using oil-based finishes as these can react with the oils in the timber causing drying problems. Water-based is recommended for these timbers as a first coat.

Surfaces must be in good, clean, dry condition, free from wax, grease and dust prior to clear coating. Sanding the surface smooth to remove any defects or damaged areas will give you a better look. Remember that clear coating over such defects will highlight them making them stand out. If the coating is left longer than 48 hours, a light sanding is required between coats to aid adhesion.

Polyurethanes can be applied by brush or speed brush. Do not apply too much at once, keep an even coating and wet edge. This will enable you to continue blending the coating in on larger areas. When coating tongue and groove, complete each board from one end to the other, this will help to maintain an even coating.

The use of sanding sealer is recommended prior to clear coating; this helps seal porous timber and gives a greater film build on finishing coats.

A minimum of 2 coats is recommended with a light sanding between coats to give you a smoother finish.

For an exceptionally hard-wearing finish on floors, bench tops, laboratory and kitchen benches, moisture cured polyurethane is recommended. It is a single pack clear coating which cures by absorbing water from the atmosphere.

All polyurethanes start as a gloss finish. A flattening agent is added to lower the gloss level, therefore it is very important that satin and matt finishes are stirred well with a flat stick to bind the agent and give a uniform gloss level.

TIMBER STAINS AND CLEARS

YOUR COMPLETE KNOW HOW GUIDE



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GETTING STARTED

Stains are used on both interior and exterior timber and on some manufactured boards. Some just colour the surface while others also offer protection.

Ideas & Inspiration



Tools

Preparation

✓ Scrapers	✓ Moss and mould killer
✓ Wire brush	✓ Plastic wood or putty
✓ Steel wool	✓ Sandpaper of various grits
✓ Filling knives	

Application

✓ Brushes	✓ Clean soft rags
✓ Drop cloths	✓ Ladders and trestles

Staining Exterior Timber

- Oil stains add colour to timber while allowing the natural texture and grain to show through.
- The oils penetrate the timber to protect and enhance its natural beauty.
- Exterior stains should only be used outside as they require UV light and wind flow to cure. They can only be used on bare timber and existing oil-stained surfaces, they cannot be used on painted surfaces or any surface that has been sealed.

Exterior stains are not as durable as painted finishes. Because of this, re-staining should be carried out every 2 to 3 summers, or as soon as timber shows signs of weathering due to exposure. If the timber retains sufficient depth of colour, select a light stain such as Kowhai or Rustic Oak for rejuvenation. Spot stain bare areas and allow overnight drying, then apply one full coat of stain over the whole area. Darker colours will attract more heat and the interval between re-staining may be reduced.

Exterior stains should be washed down regularly to remove any surface contaminants that can affect the life of the stain. A mixture of 20ml liquid sugar soap, 250ml mould killer and 4 litres water applied with a soft brush is recommended. This must be hosed off with fresh water and allowed to dry.

Preparation

Prior to staining exterior timber, it is essential that all surfaces are clean, dry and free from any contaminants such as moss, mould and mildew.

LOSP (Light Organic Solvent Preservative) treated timber must be allowed to weather prior to staining (when the smell has dispersed).

Furniture and decking timbers, such as Kwila, must be allowed to stop 'bleeding' before commencing your staining job. Bleeding is when the oils and resin in the timber migrate to the surface and care should be taken on where the timber is placed to avoid staining decorative surfaces.

The cleaning of the timber should be done with the appropriate timber cleaner to remove all contaminants. Smooth (dressed) timber surfaces should be left to weather for two weeks to lose their polished surface. This will improve the stain uptake. Existing stained timber should be cleaned thoroughly to remove dirt, grease, oils, mould and contaminants before re-staining.

Staining

Sample pots/sachets are available to test the colour. Once the correct colour is achieved, the purchase of all the stain required should be done at the same time to avoid colour variation.

Apply one coat of stain by brush, working well into the timber for penetration. Rough sawn timbers may require a second coat, but generally one coat is sufficient. A second coat should be applied after the first summer's weathering.

For weatherboards and decks, start staining from the top by brushing the stain well into the timber, following the length from one end to the other while maintaining a wet edge. Avoid overlapping as the stain could appear darker in those areas and only stop at the end or a natural joint.

It is important not to apply any stain too thickly, as excess film build can result in a varnished look, which may lead to premature failure of the coating.

Follow all manufacturers' recommendations as to drying times, recoating times, theoretical spread rate and clean-up of brushes and equipment.



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Please Note:

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