

# HOW TO BUILD THE BEST DECK

## BUILDING TIPS

Whether you hire a contractor or build your project yourself, note: treated wood will last a long time, therefore so will your workmanship. You'll be happier – and your project will look better – if you take your time and observe the following construction techniques.

- Before you begin nailing, lay out your lumber with the best-looking face exposed. Decide which pieces you want for visible areas, and which pieces for understructure.
- Separate deck boards as follows to allow for expansion and contraction. If heavy and wet, separate boards no more than 1/16" as some shrinkage will occur. If light and dry, separate boards about 1/8" to allow for swelling.
- Avoid long spans in construction. The greater the distance between supporting points, the more force developed within the wood as it dries. Also avoid designs with long cantilevers unsecured at one end.
- Liberally coat all cut ends, holes, or other intrusions into the wood with a suitable wood preservative product containing a minimum of 0.675% copper as oxine copper (copper-8 or copper-8-quinolinolate), 1% copper as copper naphthenate, or 2% zinc as zinc naphthenate. To validate warranty, use of such preservative is required for hem-fir, Douglas fir, and western hemlock of any dimensions, and for other species with a nominal thickness greater than six inches.
- Orient embedded support columns so only treated ends are in ground contact. Cut ends should face upward.
- Cover upper ends of posts with post caps or cut them at angles to shed water.
- Use enough nails. Skimping doesn't pay. Use two nails across a 2 x 4 and three across a 2 x 6. Drive nails at a slight angle toward each other.
- Fasteners should be hot-dipped galvanized or equally protected material meeting ASTM A 153. Connectors should be made from galvanized steel sheet conforming to ASTM A 653 class G185.
- To reduce splitting, drill a pilot hole about three quarters the diameter of the nail. For dense or brittle wood, grind sharpness from nails or blunt the points by striking them carefully with a hammer. Blunt nails cut through; sharp ones pry apart.
- Use 3-1/4" nails on nominal two-inch decking. Use two at each joint with 2 x 4s laid flat; use three for 2 x 6s laid flat. 3" nails are recommended for 5/4" decking.
- Lumber wider than six inches should not be used as a flat surface. Wide, flat boards are subject to ponding of rain water, which can lead to cupping problems. It is better to use two 2 x 6s than one 2 x 12.
- If a board is bowed, install it with the crown up. Gravity and the weight of people and furniture will flatten it.
- If a board has a slight bend to it, it sometimes can be straightened as it is nailed in place.

## MAINTENANCE TIPS

No maintenance is needed to renew resistance to fungi and termites. Wolmanized® wood has a lifetime limited warranty against these organisms. However, protection is required to maintain the wood's appearance against weather. Sun and rain cycles cause stresses in lumber and result in swelling, shrinking, warping, and cracking.

- To help protect your project against moisture damage, apply an effective brand of surface water repellent as soon as your outdoor wood project is finished or, for large projects, as sections are completed. Water repellent should be applied every year or two.
- To revitalize a dingy appearance caused by dirt and mildew, use deck brightener to clean the outdoor wood.
- To validate the warranty in some states and for some species, apply an end-cut solution.

**WOLMANIZED®**  
OUTDOOR® WOOD