

## How to Clean Your Teak Wood Set Without Paying a Fortune

### 2 Step Process

by Mabel White

### The Myth of Teak Oil and Teak Cleaning Kits

The report and guide is for old untreated teak that has turned Pantina Gray. The objective is to restore it to a beautiful teak color with mahogany highlights.

**Problem:** I had an 8 foot teak table with 6 deck chairs that I wanted to restore to its natural color to compliment my reddish cedar furniture. **The amount of “2 step” or “3 Step” Teak Restoration systems would be outrageous as they offer a quart of each system for about \$49.00 total, not counting shipping. I needed at least 2 gallons of each. This project would have cost me well over \$300 just to do this myself, if I did not study what is used in traditional systems and what teak oil really is made of.**

After a lot of research I came up with a few theories and tested them on parts of my teak wood that were not viewable. **So far, the results were excellent. I went ahead and proceeded to restore the entire set with my system for a total of \$40.**

I did one chair with a well known store bought 3 step system and could tell zero difference up against my system, when I was done. I was able to do the entire project within 2 days for under \$40.

**It can be used for treated teak, as long as you are willing to sand paper off the residue.** It is a common belief that teak oil will prolong the life of your teak furniture and keep that natural color the furniture had when it was new. This however is a big myth. The furniture will still turn gray over time which is very normal. **If you have a need to take gray untreated teak and bring it back to its glorious color for a few years, this can be done much easier and cheaper than the commercial kits presently on the market.**

### What About Acid Free?

I tried the acid free and got no where near the results. The amount of dirt taken off with acid based systems is considerable, and important to true restoration. The acid we suggest is readily available in any local store, as well as the final oil mixture. This system is totally easy, but designed for those that are mature and know how to take many precautionary measures when dealing with any acid. We neutralize fairly fast with apple Cider Vinegar, so as not to compromise the wood structure as much as possible. Those selling non-acid would like people to believe any kind of acid totally ruins there wood molecular structure to promote their expensive alternative.

Many companies sell “kits” that are about a quart of each, offering a three step processes. They do work, however, what if you need 2 gallons and not just a quart? That means you have to buy 8 “kits” and that can be hundreds of dollars. Also, we noted, the first quart is to clean the teak. We noted that was potassium hydroxide, a caustic ash I would use to make liquid soap. It sure does clean, no doubt tons of dirt came off my sample 6 year old set.

The second commercial kit “step” is the brighten, and that product, typically consisting of oxalic acid, does brighten to a light tan teak color. The second step must also be done on the second day—so the teak is dry from the cleaning. We found that annoying. The third day, with most “kits” you would apply a teak oil to seal and protect the wood for a few more years. We found the definition of what Teak oil is even more annoying. It is not extracted from Teak trees and it is just oil that does not go rancid is what we found. We need to know this also, because we are not thrilled to pay a few hundred dollars just for enough oil to do the job. Not counting step one and two. **Our method is only two step: Cleaning on Day One and Applying Oil on Day Two.**

**Most people restore their teak furniture to its original color by** simply sanding it lightly with a fine grain sandpaper and then reapply teak oil or just leave it as it is. We see nothing simple about this and it really does not address cleaning an old Teak set.

**We do not bother sanding, but you can do it if it makes you feel better. We feel Step One is good enough to open the pores of the wood and truly clean it.** In time, it will of course turn gray again. **With our method, that may be every two years instead of every year.** Because teak is a high quality piece of outdoor furniture, weather and harsh conditions have had little effect on the structural integrity of the piece. Underneath the oxidation is a beautiful piece of furniture. Totally affordable and totally easy restoration with our method can be done as follows:

### **Mabel White’s Method of Cleaning and Restoring Old Teak Wood**

#### **Preparation clothing:**

1. Solid Rubber gloves.
2. A painters mask for your mouth (to avoid inhalation)
3. Eye protection, such as goggles.
4. A lab coat or any kind of disposable jacket with long arms.
5. Disposable wooden sticks to stir, (plenty sticks)
6. A two quart plastic pitcher that can be thrown out after use
7. Disposable big rubber sponges, plenty (one for acid, one for neutralizer and one for oil)
8. Disposable plastic surface scrubbers.
9. A garbage bag to throw it all in when done.
10. Protective pant gear and maybe a change of gear nearby.
11. An area no one will disturb you and ground cover will not absorb poisons.
12. Do not pick a windy or rainy day and take this project OUTSIDE.
13. Wear painter’s plastic over your shoes. Your feet are bound to get wet.

I had to change into three different gears during my 5 hour restoration. So I picked three pairs of back up gear and took several breaks. When you start getting wet, it is hard to determine if you are wet with water, lye or just vinegar, the neutralizer. To be safe I remove the clothing, dump with vinegar and also pour some on my arms and legs. Anywhere that may have gotten wet. During this time I have a free running hose near by. I did mine on my shell driveway because there is a lot of drainage into non harmful places until I am done neutralizing the area with apple cider vinegar.

For every average sized teak patio chair, you will need:

**6 Ounces of Lye** (six ounces to each gallon bucket of water) **Red Devil Lye** crystals can be found in many grocery stores in the plumbing section.

**A wood stick to stir the lye into the bucket of water, (while protected.)**

1/2 Gallon of Apple Cider Vinegar (to neutralize the piece as soon as it is wiped down)

\*We use Sodium Hydroxide (Lye) because it does work. Many commercial companies will complain it harms the ions of the wood because you would not need "their product." We find this BS because Lye can be neutralized fairly quickly after the Lye is applied with Apple Cider Vinegar which also promotes a glorious color!

#### **Ready to Start? Read ALL of This TWICE First**

1. Wear rubber gloves and protective coating with this first step of cleaning the wood. We find Potassium Hydroxide will really clean the heck out of your wood, yet it is fairly weak compared to Sodium Hydroxide which will really bring the color out, clean it and brighten it also. With SH you do not need a second step "brightener."

**2. Make sure your furniture is in a place people or animals are not walking around, and that the ground will not be affected. Such as on a driveway or on grass you do not care about, or best, a shell walk way. As you clean up, you will also be pouring Apple Cider Vinegar over the area you did your work to neutralize and then flushing that area with a lot of water. The most important thing is to just make sure you neutralize, and even throw some vinegar in your garbage from this project. Have your vinegar open and ready and a hose running with water just in case you get slimed (by the lye.)**

3. Fill a two gallon bucket of water with ONE GALLON OF WATER. Then slowly add 6 ounces of the lye. Stir fast and well so the lye does not clump and crystallize. Do not splash yourself or breath the smoke in. NEVER ADD WATER TO LYE. Always slowly add lye to water while stirring in protective gear. This is not that scary-just be careful. Nothing will explode unless you add water to dry lye. **Always add LYE to WATER.** Not the reverse.

4. Bring the solution out to your project teak and pour all over quickly sponging across as you pour to remove the mega dirt you will see. Be prepared to need a second sponge and keep pouring and wiping and rinsing the dirty scum sponge with water. You will happily see your teak come through from gray to beautiful mahogany looking tri colors. Try to be even with your coats and not allow the solution to "run" as it is hard to get "runs" out with saturating the area a second time.

5. Wait about five minutes to truly allow the solution to work and clean before you rinse very well with a hose. **While you are sponging the lye solution you will see some gunk come up that needs a more scrubby type sponge to smooth out. It is ok to smooth this out more so in tight areas. A thin scrubby pad will get these areas.** When you feel it is cleaned and rinsed,

dump a gallon of Apple Cider Vinegar all over the area and your gloves to begin neutralizing whatever you touched with the lye solution.

6. After neutralizing the piece allow it to dry for a good day. The dry work will not be as dark as it was when you were cleaning, but it will be clean as hell which is why the oil will work to bring those colors back out. The Teak Oil you are about to make at a FRACTION of the COST will pull those beautiful highlights back into the photo of things!

The supplies to do an entire 7' Teak Table with 6 Deck Chairs should cost you \$40.

### **Making Teak Oil**

As I noted before, Teak Oil seems pretty mysterious as well as expensive. We all know it is not made from a real teak tree. We do know it is made from a combination of oils that tend not to go rancid. When making this formula, the Bee Pollen should be soaked for a week in the fractionated coconut oil in a glass vessel such as a mason jar and set in the sun. After even a few sunny days you can strain the bee pollen, stir in the Rosemary Oleoresin Extract and get to work! Here I will cheat and buy a quart of dark teak oil to shake into my final mixture. It is worth it after all you have been through, but not mandatory by any means. The photos you see did not include teak oil—just my recipe here.

### **Estimated Formula for One Teak Deck Chair**

8 Ounces of Fractionated Coconut Oil  
2 Ounces of Bee Pollen  
1/4 Ounce of Rosemary Oleoresin Extract  
1 drop of blue or red oil based dye (optional) if slight color enhancement is preferred  
10 drops of Cedar Wood, Sandalwood, or Patchouli Essential Oil (if a slight cent is desired)

Mix very well before applying. The bee pollen gives the wood glorious tones and this oil can even be used for old dried wood floors.

These supplies should cost you \$10.

### **Estimated Formula for a Large Patio Table with Six Deck Chairs**

1 Gallon of Fractionated Coconut Oil  
1 Pound of Bee Pollen  
2 Ounces of Rosemary Oleoresin Extract  
5 drop of blue or red oil based dye (optional) if slight color enhancement is preferred  
40 drops of Cedar Wood, Sandalwood, or Patchouli Essential Oil (if a slight cent is desired)

My company, Mabel White Dot Com does sell Rosemary Oleoresin Extract (not to be confused with Rosemary Essential Oil at all) as well as Bee Pollen Oil (Great also for healing your skin) oil based non-toxic dyes and essential oils if you want your set to have a great scent. All of this is optional. If you prefer, you can order Mabel's Teak Oil already prepared for \$99.95 a gallon and just specify in the cart menu COMMENT SECTION what essential oil scent you would like in it.

We hope you enjoy this Project and we are thrilled to figure this method out!

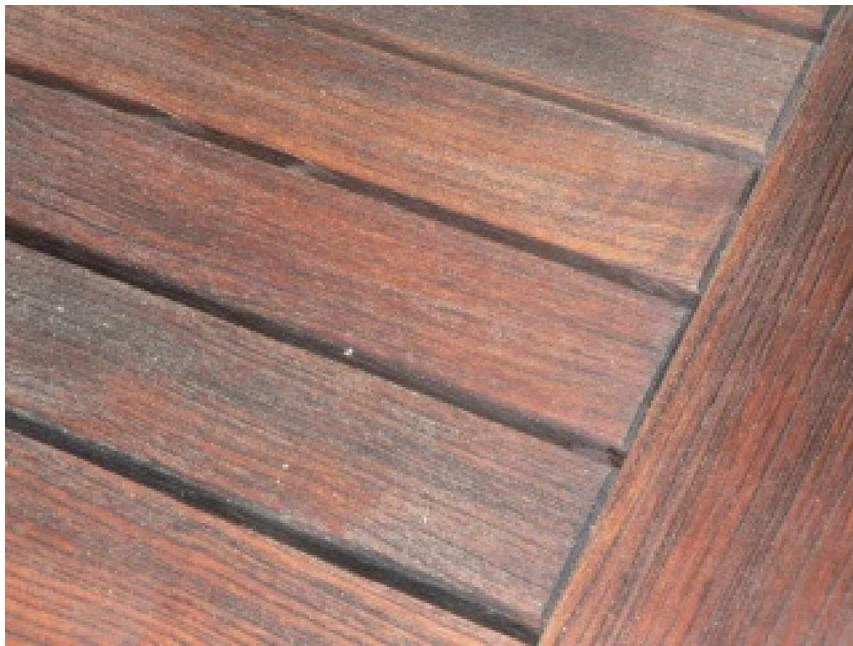
**Before:**



\*Disclaimer: Use this method at your own risk. It is not my problem if a reader is an idiot and skips very clear precautionary measures, does not test sample the method, or totally ruins a nice teak set because they deviated from the method above. Keeping other people, animals, or distractive activity away from this project cannot be emphasized enough.



**After:**





Do make sure your work cures in the sun for one day or indoors for three days before you allow people to sit down. The oil needs to absorb totally into the wood and will fairly quickly. Good Luck!

**Copyright Mabel White Home Living Corporation 2005, no reproduction is allowed and this information is proprietary to the Copyright holder. Please respect the fact it took a lot of time, money and research to figure this out.**

[www.MabelWhite.com](http://www.MabelWhite.com)