

Business *Insight*

Time to get your deck ready for summer

As tulips bloom, trees flower and grass turns green, it's time to head out to your deck and enjoy the springtime. Whether it's to read a book, visit with friends, or fire up the grill, people love hanging out on their decks.

Your deck is an extension of your indoor living space, and it needs attention to keep it looking good. Exterior wood is exposed to the elements – sun, dirt, rain and snow – all year long, and proper care will prevent expensive repairs and prolong its life.

Wayne Owczarzak, owner of Mr. Handyman, a family-owned and operated professional handyman company, offers these services to keep your deck in tip-top shape so it will last for many years.

Wash, repair and protect.

Inspect your deck and look for any loose boards, splintered or rotted wood and protruding nails that need repair. Check that the deck is stable and not leaning. Replace any components that have rotted, are loose or cracking.

Make sure supports are secure and properly installed to prevent any accidents from happening. When the base of the stairs sits directly on the ground in soil, the wood will eventually rot and the stairs may start to lean or collapse and will need to be rebuilt and put on a level surface. Take a close look at your deck to make sure it is ready for another safe and enjoyable summer.

Carefully pressure wash the deck and let it dry for a few days. Then apply a layer of stain or sealer that is transparent or semi-



transparent because they tend to hold up better than a solid color, which eventually will peel and flake. Once you apply a solid color, you're stuck with it, and it's expensive to remove it and switch to a more transparent stain.

Though some people choose to paint their decks with exterior paint or solid colored stains, take advantage of enhancing the natural beauty of your deck by using a transparent or semi-transparent stain finish. It requires less work and time to clean and will last longer, meaning you may get an extra year or two between refinishes.

Use composite.

There are many choices of decking materials available today, from treated pine to cedar to ultra low maintenance composite and PVC products offering many variations in color and texture. Low-maintenance decking is more expensive, but in the long run when you factor in all the maintenance of a wood deck, the price may not be much more. Some of today's low-maintenance decking options look as good as the hardwood flooring in your home.

Want to update your deck? The existing wood decking can be removed, leaving the current support system or framing ready to resurface with composite material. It is more expensive but the big advantage is it's nearly maintenance-free and looks good all the time. Add hidden fasteners and you'll never see a nail pop up again. Do the same with your railings, and it will look like a brand new deck.



Spruce it up.

Spruce up your deck by changing the balusters to metal or to one with a design. This small improvement will give the deck a new look.

Low voltage or solar lighting can greatly improve the function and appearance of your deck at night. Low voltage lighting illuminates the areas of the deck that you want to see, making stairs and railings more visible and safe. Solar lighting soaks up enough light during the day to last all night and comes in many attractive options.

The same ideas and improvements can be used for your porch. Whether you prefer natural wood products or composite products, there is an endless amount of choices. Give us a call. We would be happy to help.



Mr. Handyman of Wheaton-Hinsdale

245 W. Roosevelt Road #69, West Chicago

(630) 225-9950

www.mrhandyman.com