



INSTALLATION & CARE GUIDE

The Modern
Lawn
Company

A detailed guide on
how to install and
maintain your
composite decking.



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BEFORE YOU INSTALL / Handling Your Composite Decking....

- 1.** If storage is necessary before installation, ensure the decking is kept in a flat, suitable area. Place the boards on battens spaced no more than 400mm apart to keep them level and prevent warping, scratches, or exposure to standing water.
- 2.** If the composite decking boards need to be stored, cover them to keep the surface clean. For outdoor storage, use a non-translucent covering to protect them from exposure.
- 3.** Handle the boards with care, lifting rather than sliding or dropping them to prevent scratches or damage.
- 4.** During installation, avoid dragging or dropping tools and equipment on the decking to prevent damage.



BEFORE YOU INSTALL / Choosing the Right Tools....



Standard wood working tools can be used with **Composite Decking**.

Circular Saw - For the best results, use a 40-tooth blade to ensure clean and precise cuts.

A power mitre saw is ideal for creating bevelled edges and ensuring precise, uniform cuts.

Use an impact driver or a hand drill set to low torque for secure and controlled fastening.

During installation, lift equipment rather than dragging or sliding it across the boards to prevent damage.

Tape Measure, Carpentry Square, and Spirit Level - Essential tools for accurate measurements, straight edges, and a level installation.

Appropriate PPE: - Safety Goggles - Dust Mask - Ear Protection



BEFORE YOU INSTALL

Important Considerations....

Pre-Planning - Carefully assess the size, shape, and orientation of your deck during the initial planning phase to ensure a well-thought-out design.

The board layout will determine joist placement, so consider boundaries and doorways that may affect the design.

TEMPERATURE:

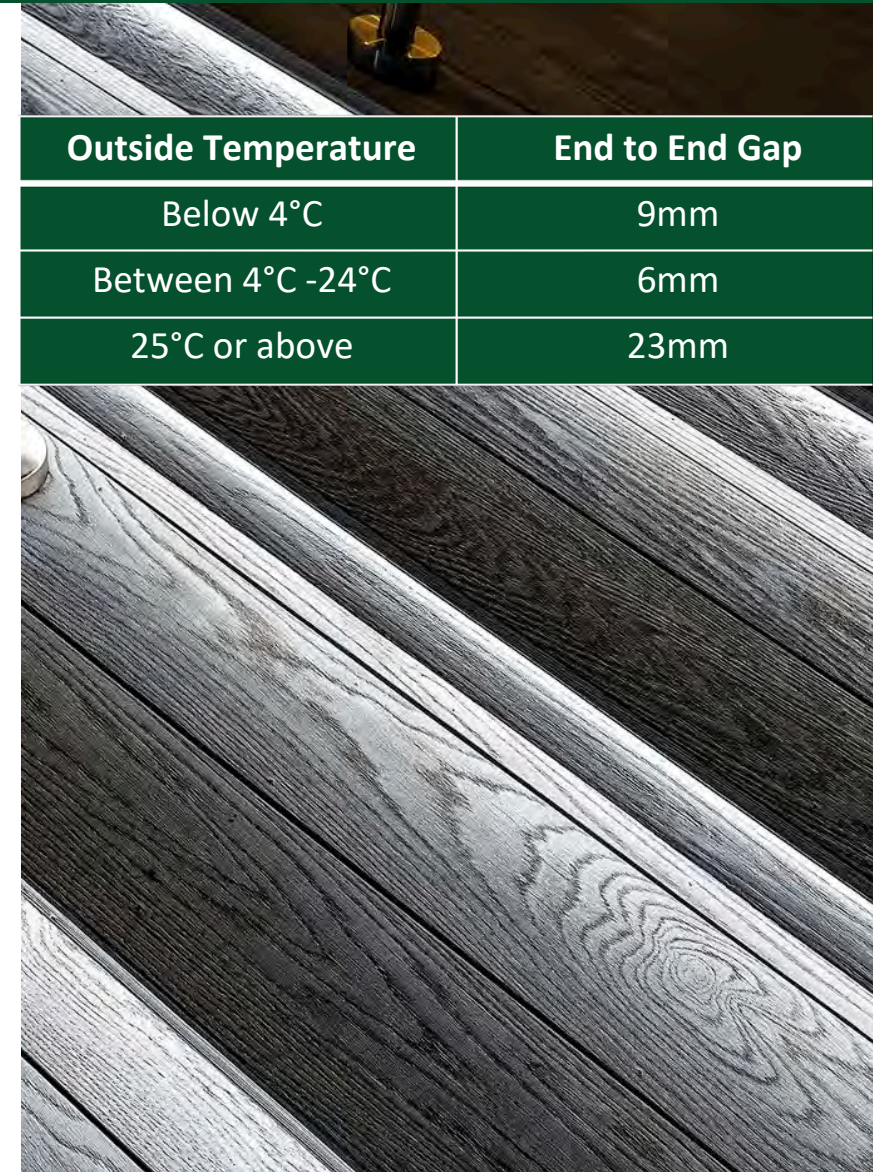
Composite decking expands and contracts with temperature changes. The T-clip and screw system allows for this movement, and expansion gaps must be included at end-to-end joins and where the deck meets boundaries (e.g., walls). Refer to the installation temperature guide for specific spacing.

SUBFRAME:

Our decking should never be installed without a suitable subframe, all decking boards should be installed onto either a timber, metal or composite framework. Always allow a 40mm space beneath the decking subframe to allow adequate airflow under the deck.

COLOUR:

Expect an initial "fade back" within the first three months as tannins in the wood react to weather. After this, colour changes will be minimal. Edging and corner trims may appear slightly different, especially when using the woodgrain side, but this will become less noticeable over time.



Outside Temperature	End to End Gap
Below 4°C	9mm
Between 4°C -24°C	6mm
25°C or above	23mm



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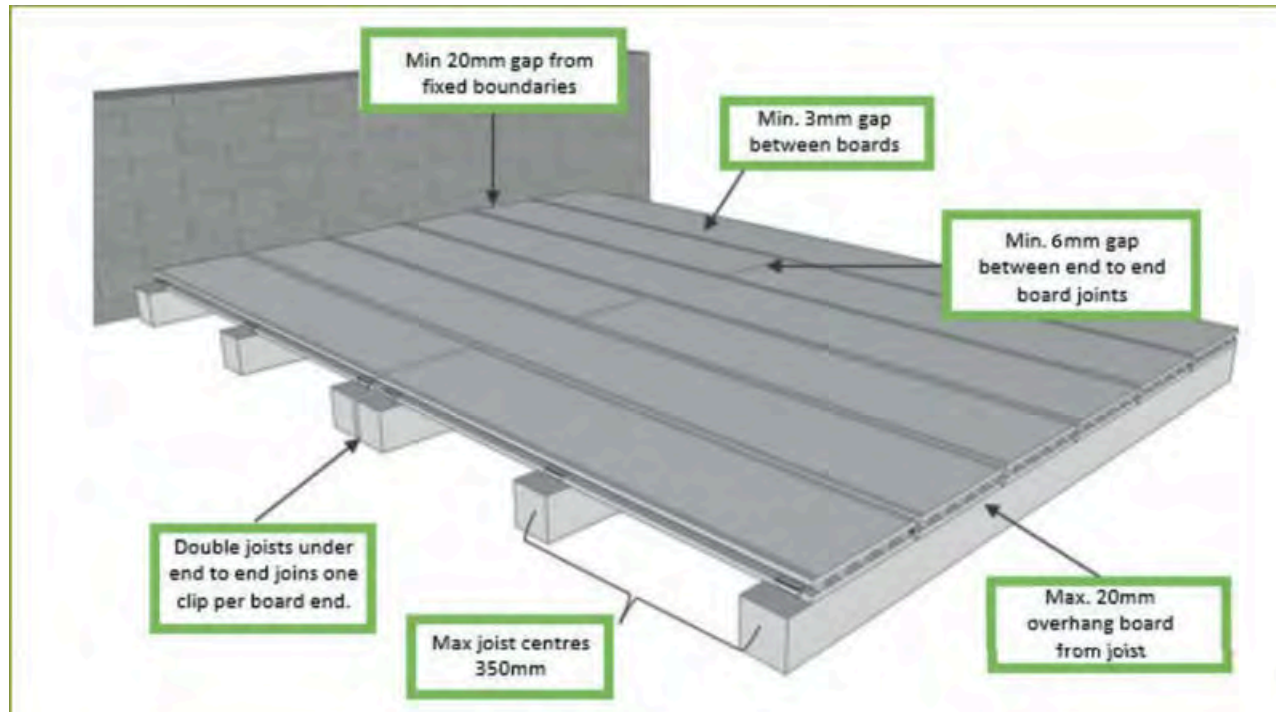
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Spacing the Boards & Subframe...

Composite Decking boards require a minimum 3mm gap between boards, with a recommended spacing of 6mm-10mm, determined by the T-clip and screw system.

End-to-end butt joints should have at least a 6mm gap, depending on temperature (refer to the previous page for guidance). Joist centres should not exceed 350mm. End-to-end joints must be supported by two joists, one for each board, with clips securing the ends.

Ensure a 0.5% gradient per meter for proper water drainage.



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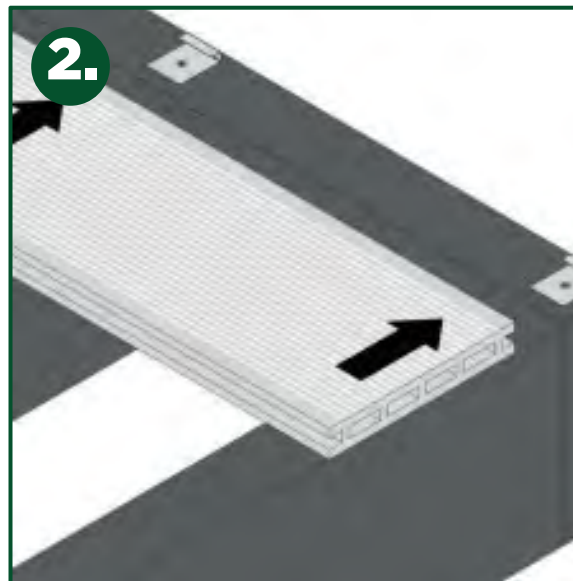
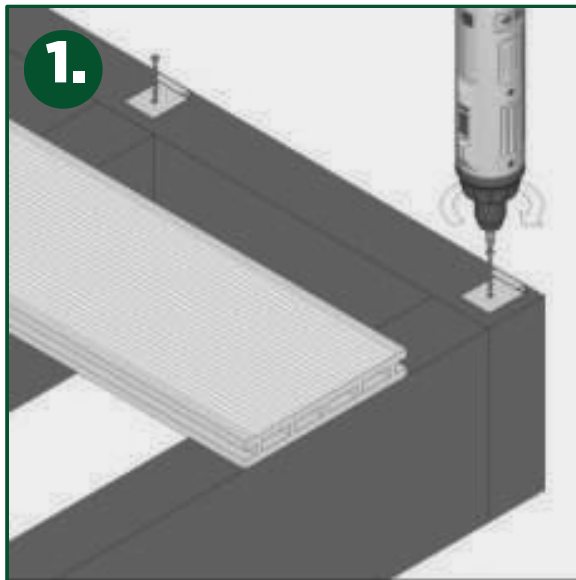
Getting Started

Once the subframe is securely laid and levelled, you can begin installing the decking boards.

Begin at the outer edge of your decking project by securing Starter Clips to the framework using the provided steel screws. (See fig. 1)

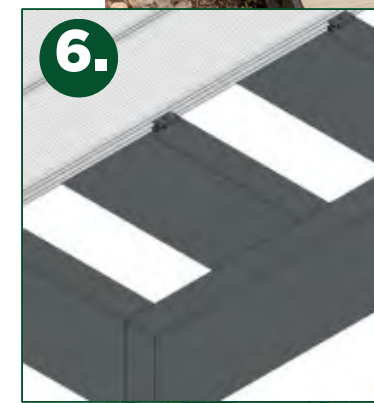
Countersinking is recommended to make screw insertion easier and ensure a flush finish.

Position starter clips at every 350mm of the joist length to ensure secure fixings. Clip the first board into the Starter Clips. (fig 2)



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Securing the Decking Boards....



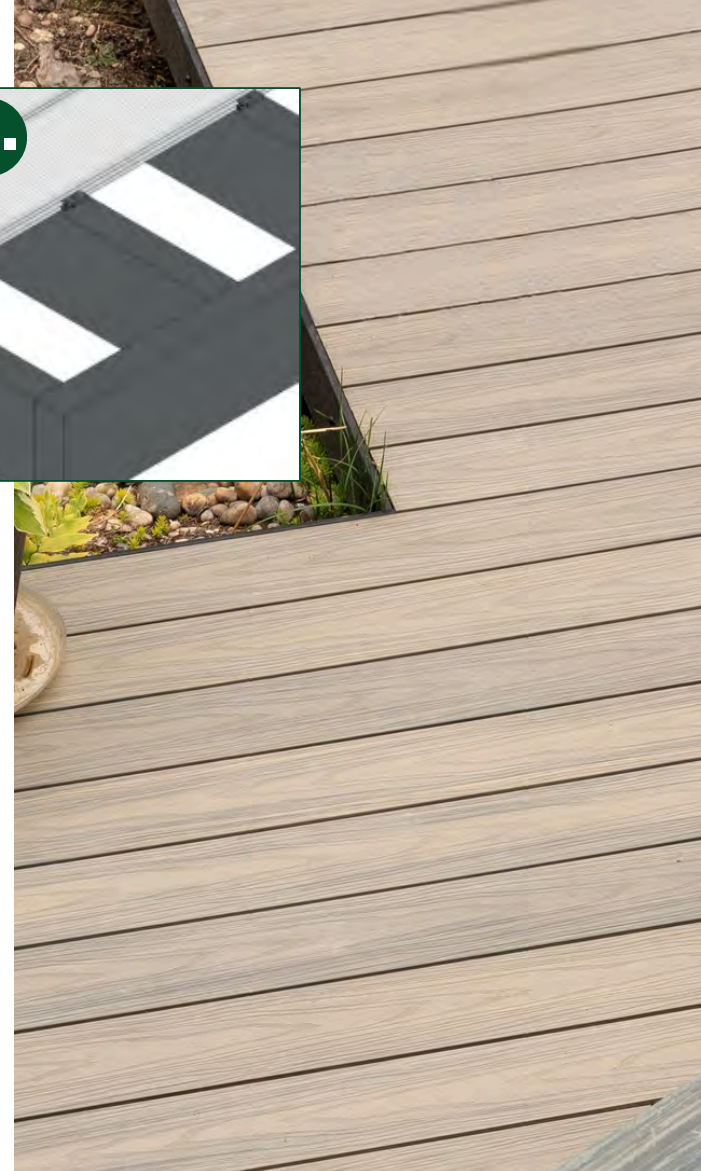
When using T-Clips and screws, lightly secure them in place without fully tightening at this stage. (See fig. 3)

Next, position the following board onto the framework against the clips and screws (see fig. 4). You may need to slightly lift the edge of the board to slide it into the clips. Ensure the board is in full contact with the clips along its entire length.

Clips should be positioned every 350mm for secure installation.

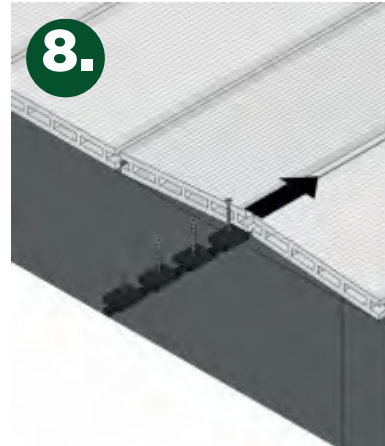
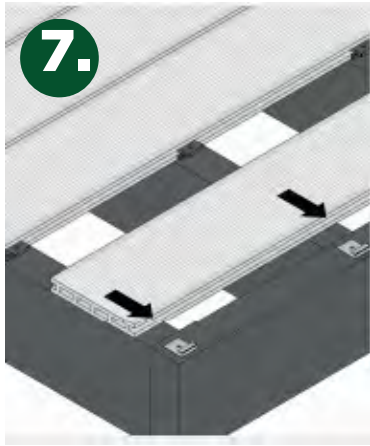
Now, fully tighten the T-Clips and screws between the boards you have just installed. (See fig. 5)

Repeat steps 3, 4, and 5 until you reach the final two boards. (See fig. 6)



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The Last Board...



Measure the width of the final two boards, ensuring a 6mm spacing gap between them. Mark this measurement on the last joists and use it as a guide to install the Steel Finishing Clips. Finally, secure the last decking board in place. (See fig. 7)

Once the final board is secured, insert the remaining board, ensuring a minimum 6mm gap between them. Then, slide down the required number of T-Clips (see fig. 8) and screw them into the joists for a secure fit.

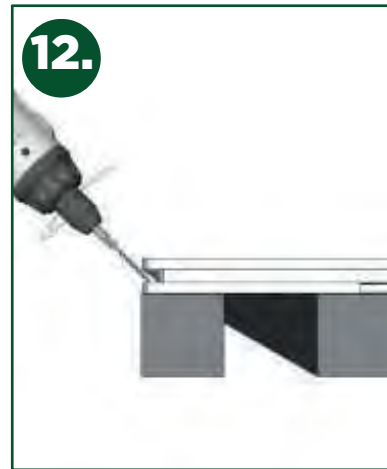
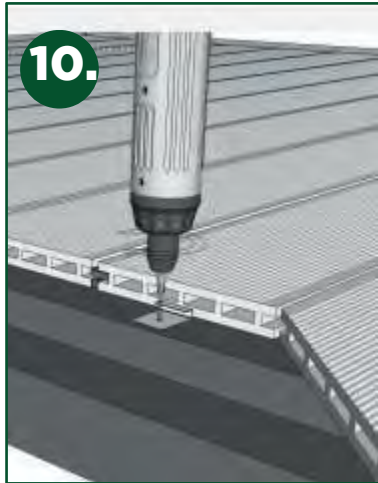
If the installation does not allow for the previous method, the last board can be secured by angling screws through the bottom of the board at every 350mm after all other boards are in place (see fig. 9). Avoid over-tightening to prevent material splitting.

Avoid over-tightening the screws to prevent the decking material from splitting.



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Picture Frame Border...



If you plan to install a picture frame border, ensure the substructure is correctly laid out.

A double joist structure must be positioned beneath all edges where the picture frame border runs perpendicular to the main deck. (See fig. 12)

For borders running parallel to the decking, follow the method outlined on the previous page (fig. 3-9), incorporating a 45° mitred edge. (See fig. 11)

For boards running perpendicular to the main deck, attach Starter Clips to the inner joists to secure the inner board edge (see fig. 10). Clips should be installed every 35mm along the joist. Once in place, slide the board into the Starter Clips (see fig. 11). Ensure a 6-10mm expansion gap is maintained between the mitred edges.

Once the board is positioned, secure it by screwing into the outer edge (see fig. 12).



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Edging Trims...



Measure the required length of edging trim and cut it to size. If installing around corners, mitre the ends at a 45° angle (see fig. 13). Cover the deck edge with corner trim and secure it with screws.

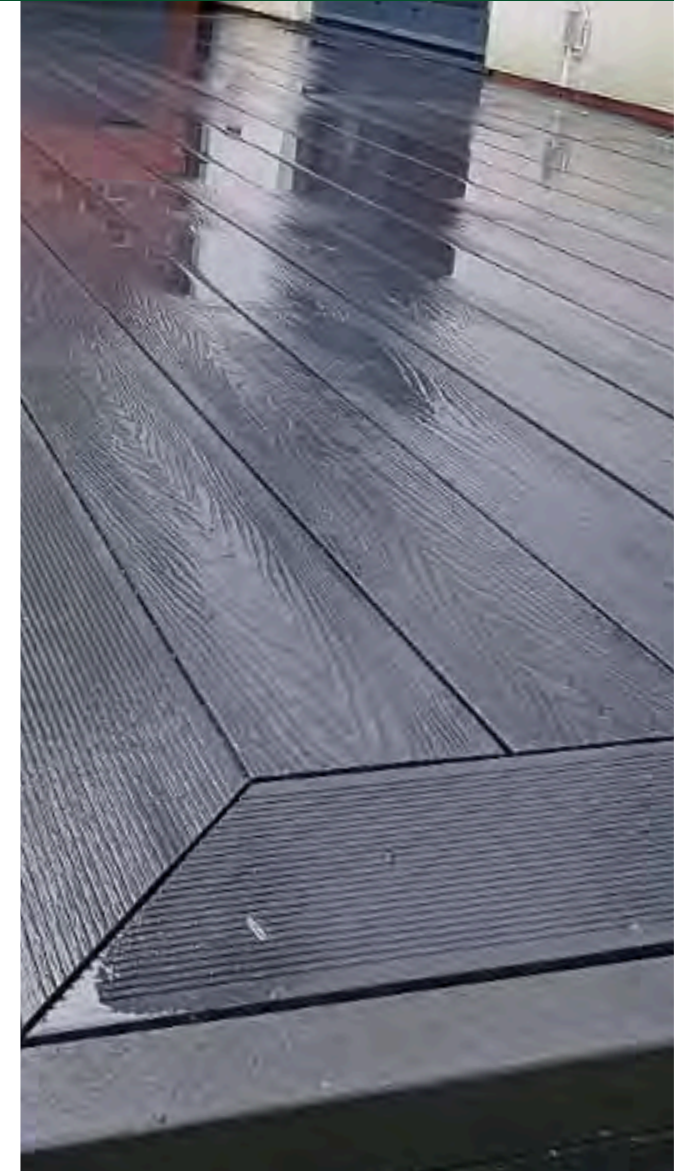
Pre-drill 4mm countersunk pilot holes before securing the edging trim (see fig. 14).

Secure the edging trim using 50mm countersunk screws (see fig. 14).

Avoid over-tightening screws when securing composite products. Finish tightening by hand to prevent damage.

Corner trim can be screwed into the deck, but for best results, use an outdoor/external building adhesive such as CT1 or Gripfill. Additionally, reinforce by securing with screws every other foot for extra stability.

Ensure a minimum 4mm expansion gap where corner trim ends meet to allow for natural movement.



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Decking Steps...

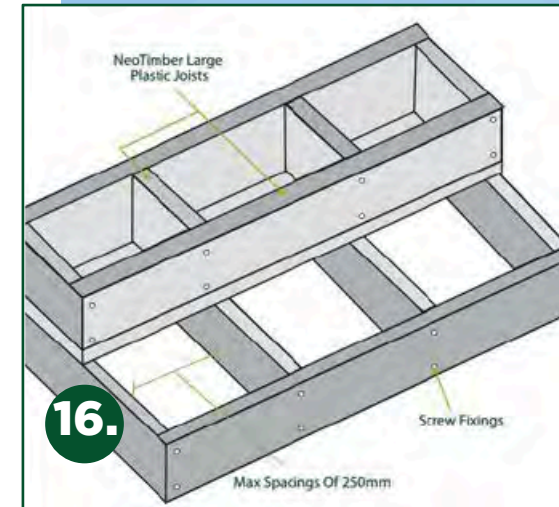
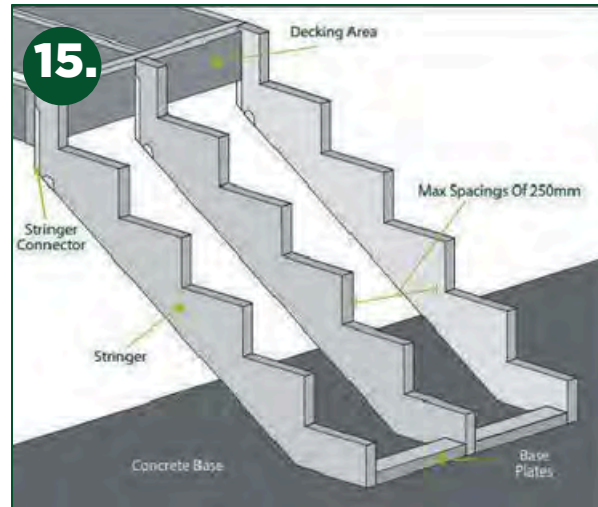
Careful planning is essential to ensure step rise and tread remain consistent:

- The rise should not exceed 190mm.
- The tread must be between 250-450mm deep.

For structural support, a flat, solid landing pad made of concrete or gravel is recommended beneath the step area.

There are two main methods for installing steps in your decking project:

- Stringer Steps
- Box-Framed Steps



Stringer steps are typically made from timber, with stringers acting as structural supports extending from the decking subframe to the base of the step area. A network of stringers forms the framework, ensuring stability and support (Fig. 15).

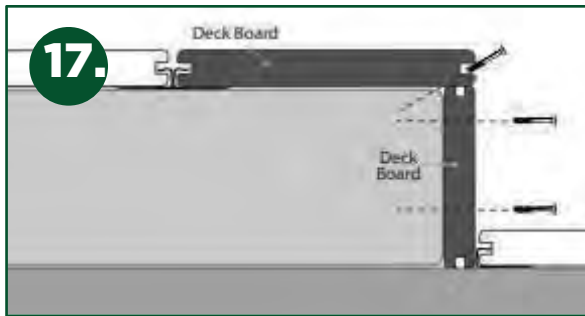
Notches should be cut into pressure-treated timber using a carpentry square and saw to form the rise and tread. To secure the stringer steps at the base, anchor them with a base plate and attach them to the landing pad. For securing to the deck area, reinforce the subframe behind the steps with a stair header and install a stringer connector.

Box-framed steps (Fig. 16) are constructed by stacking a series of box structures to create a step run. Each box framework should be filled with joists spaced at 250mm intervals. These steps can be made from timber, metal, or plastic joists. Secure the box-frame to the decking subframe at every intersection using appropriate fixings.



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Decking Steps (cont)...



Fix the boards to create both the tread and riser of the steps, securing them directly onto the step framework using the T-Clip system where possible. For exposed grooved edges, use screw fixings, or face-fix the board with a composite screw (Fig. 17).

Fix the edging trim to the exposed edge of the board, covering the deck edge with corner trim and securing it with screws (Fig. 18). Pre-drill 4mm countersunk pilot holes and fix with 50mm countersunk screws. Avoid over-tightening when securing composite products—finish tightening by hand to prevent damage.

Corner trims should be secured only by screwing them into the deck.



CARE GUIDE

Routine Cleaning...



Our composite products require minimal maintenance, but regular cleaning will help keep your outdoor space looking its best for longer.
Routine Cleaning - It is recommended to clean your decking every three months to remove dirt, mud, and soil that may accumulate over time.

For general cleaning, apply warm soapy water to the surface of the boards and scrub with a soft-bristled brush.

For a deeper clean, use a jet wash with a maximum pressure of 1500 PSI to remove surface debris. When using the fan attachment, keep it at least 150mm (6 inches) away from the board surface. Following these guidelines will help maintain the long-term finish of your decking.

Regardless of the cleaning method used, always clean along the length of the boards to prevent debris build-up that could obstruct drainage.



Most stains can be removed using soap or a household degreasing agent with warm water. For best results, scrub and soak the affected area as soon as the stain occurs, then rinse thoroughly with warm water.

For more stubborn stains, using a composite-specific cleaner is recommended for effective removal. In cases of deeply set stains, lightly sanding with coarse sandpaper (60-80 grit) may help, but always sand in the direction of the grain. Be cautious when sanding wood-grained decking, as this may reduce the enhanced texture.

Cleaned or sanded areas may lighten and may take 8-10 weeks of sun exposure to blend with the rest of the decking, depending on location and application. Due to the wood content, composite products, like any wood-based material, may undergo a natural process called extractive bleeding (also known as tea staining). This can cause temporary discoloration, which will fade over time.

While our boards are resistant to the harmful effects of mold and mildew, these can still develop on almost any outdoor surface and may accumulate on the decking. Regular maintenance, as outlined in the Routine Cleaning section, will help prevent excessive build-up.



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Water Staining...

Although great care is taken during manufacturing, residual oils may remain in our Woodgrain and Grooved ranges, occasionally leading to white streaks on the surface of the deck boards. These water stains will naturally fade over approximately 6-8 weeks with exposure to rain.

To speed up the process, thoroughly clean the affected boards using warm soapy water.

You may also use a jet wash on the affected area to help remove surface residue more effectively.



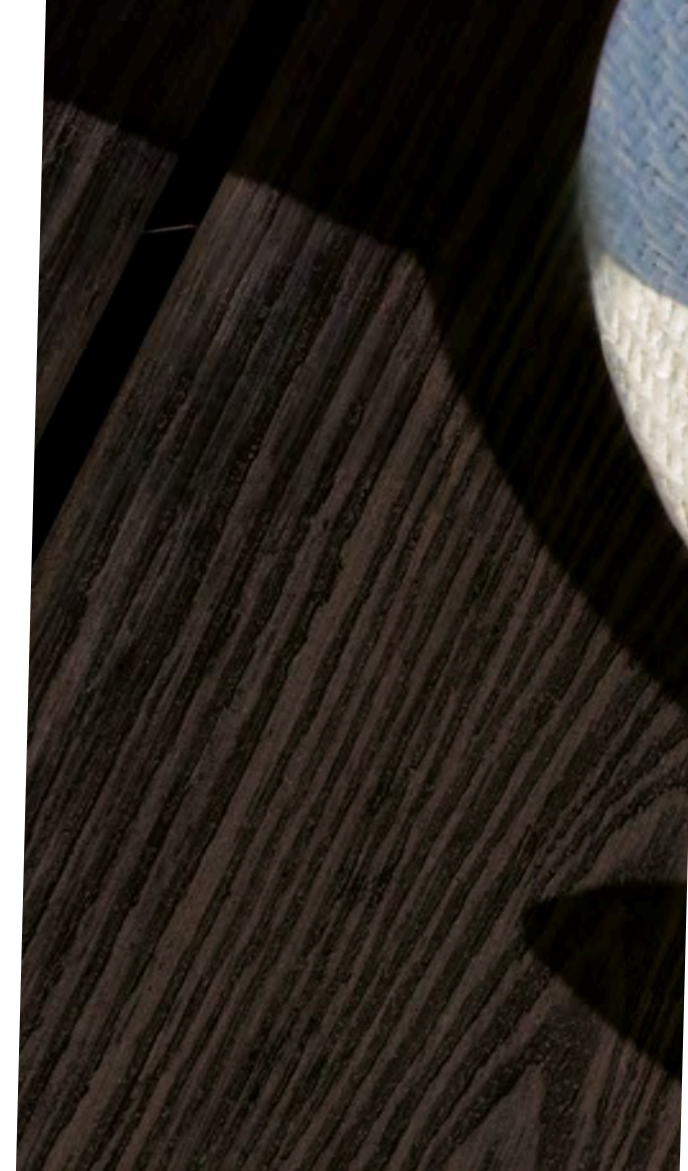
To keep your deck safe during winter, ensure that snow and ice are thoroughly cleared from the surface.

Follow these steps to protect your decking from **winter conditions:**

Avoid using metal shovels, rakes, hoes, ice chippers, or any sharp objects to remove snow or ice, as they may scratch or damage the surface. Instead, use a plastic shovel for safer clearing.

Use a salt-free, non-corrosive ice melt that won't leave residue on the boards and is more effective than salt-based alternatives. Apply it before a forecasted frost or to areas where ice has already formed.

While rock salt can be used on composite decking, it should be cleared away soon after application to prevent potential surface damage or scratching.



Q. Will the colour fade over time?

A. Our composite decking is more fade-resistant than traditional wooden decking. Over the first six months, the boards will gradually lighten to their weathered colour. After this period, any further fading will be minimal.

Q. How do your products react when exposed to water?

A. Our decking boards are designed to absorb minimal water, significantly reducing the risk of wet rot over time. With a much lower absorption rate than timber, they offer greater durability in wet conditions.

Q. Do you have recommended installers I can use?

A. We have a trusted network of recommended installers who are selected for their high-quality workmanship and professionalism. However, as with any third party, we advise conducting your own due diligence before entering into a contract.

Q. Does composite decking get hotter than wooden decking when under the sun?

A. Studies show that the colour of the decking board is the most significant factor in heat retention, whether it's wood-plastic composite or traditional wood. Darker boards absorb heat more quickly than lighter ones. In these tests, pressure-treated wood stained the same colour was found to be hotter under the same conditions.

