



## Garden Bench Care & Maintenance Guide



All the benches we sell at Garden Benches Direct are chosen for their quality and durability. Our benches are designed to last for many years, without any maintenance. But if you want to make sure your bench lasts a lifetime, and keeps its original glossy finish, we do recommend giving your bench a little love at least once a year.

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## Teak Care

Teak, like all wood, is a natural living fibre. Because of this the colour of the wood will change over time, depending on weather conditions and natural aging. Teak is a beautiful tropical hardwood with a golden, honey colour when new. If left to age naturally, teak will fade to a delicate silver patina – which some individuals may prefer.

### Cleaning & Oiling

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#### *Equipment You May Need:*



To retain teak's natural finish, all that's required is the occasional treatment. We recommend treating your bench with our premium spray-on teak oil, designed to maintain the appearance of the timber and prevent warping.

Teak oil only needs to be applied once a year, typically around the time the sun begins to shine again in the spring. For the best effects, apply teak oil to a cleaned piece of furniture and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

To clean your furniture, use a non-metallic brush and stroke lightly in the same direction as the grain. You can use warm soapy water to remove stubborn mud stains, using the brush to scrub the surface clean. Don't scrub too hard though, as you may unintentionally remove the surface layer of wood – dampening the vitality of the grain.

Once clean, pat your furniture dry and leave in the sun to naturally remove any excess moisture. For thorough drying, we recommend at least 12 hours of drying time. Ultimately, the drier the wood the better the finish when using teak oil. An overnight dry would be the ideal option.

When using teak oil on your furniture, adopt the 'less is more' strategy. Use a lint-free cloth to massage the oil into the timber then wipe off any excess. Allow the surface of the bench to dry fully before adding any further coats. After this, your furniture is now protected for another year of use.

### Where to Keep your Teak Furniture

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Teak is a naturally resilient wood that copes well with moisture, mould and pests. Teak is renowned for its durability and is often used on maritime vessels as decking and inside old buildings. In fact, many structures made from teak are still standing today.

Because of this, teak furniture can be left outside all year round without much risk of cracking, splitting, or warping. Teak that is left outside to

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weather will naturally assume a refined, silvery grey tone. If you'd prefer to keep the warmer appearance of fresh timber, a cover can be used to keep the harshest wind and rain away. When covering your furniture, ensure that the cover is pulled taught, as this will discourage the growth of mould or mildew.

Leaving your teak furniture exposed or under-cover is entirely an aesthetic choice, depending on your preference on the colour of the timber.



## Stain Removal

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On occasion, your teak furniture might be the victim of a spillage or stain. A knocked glass of wine or cup of tea shouldn't be an issue for such a hardwearing and naturally oily wood.

The best way to remove a stain from teak is by lightly sanding the stained area with fine grade sandpaper until the stain has been lifted. For persistent stains, you may need to use a harsher grade sandpaper to begin with and then use finer grades as the stain begins to lift. Switching to finer sandpaper will provide a smoother finish.

To restore the colour and shine of your teak, simply apply some teak oil to the affected area and leave to soak overnight.

The resulting furniture should now be as good as new. For stubborn stains, it might be worth consulting a specialist who can recommend a reputable cleaning product that is specifically designed for teak. However, most stains can simply be sanded away, and the timber restored to its natural warmth.



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## Splitting & Cracking

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Unlike man-made materials like metal or plastic, wood is a natural, living material that responds to changes in its environment. Because of this, you may notice small splits appear on your garden bench from time to time. Rather than being a defect or a sign of damage, these splits are an entirely natural phenomenon that can appear on any piece of timber, regardless of its quality, species, or the level of care it's received.

The cause of splits and cracks appearing in wood has a great deal to do with its water content. Green wood that's been freshly cut can contain a water content of up to 50% of its total weight. This water is either stored inside capillaries, called "free water," or stored deep within the timber, called "bound water." When a piece of wood is selected for furniture making, its "free water" is the first to evaporate throughout the drying process. When the timber reaches a reduced water content of between 25-30% it is ready to be worked. The remaining "bound water" within the wood is the cause of splitting later down the line.

Small fissures and splits typically occur in the summer with the arrival of warmer weather and changes in air moisture. When the air moisture content drops, timber will begin drying out —releasing the "bound water" at its centre by splitting, which allows the water to escape.

There is no real way of preventing this: it is a process completely governed by nature. Rest assured however, splits will usually appear and disappear throughout the timber's lifespan and very few remain as a constant mark. In fact, when the "bound water" has evaporated and the centre of the wood has dried, splits will often close back up — only to re-emerge later when the process repeats itself.

Wood is renowned for being an imperfect medium and due to its unique biological properties, it will never have the immaculate appearance of metal or plastic. Part of the appeal of choosing wooden furniture is that the fibres will breathe, flex, split, and then heal over again: this is what makes a wooden garden bench a truly unique, individual piece of furniture. Providing you treat your bench with the correct care, minor splits will not be the cause of a larger problem — they're simply a sign of timber's natural, organic processes.

