

How to Get Rid of Ronseal Stain and Rejuvenate Your Decking

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1 Introduction

Does your Ronseal Decking Stain crack and peel after the winter. Mine does, or rather did!

I built my decking 7 years ago, and since then have used Ronseal Country Oak Decking Stain every year - primarily due to the fact that there were many small areas where the Stain had peeled and flaked off each year. In summer this year the peeling and flaking had become so bad that I finally decided to completely remove the Decking Stain and start again. See photos below for the problem: -



Above shows the detail on a portion of handrail



Above shows the extent of the problem on two areas of handrail



Above shows the detail on decking planks



Above shows the extent of the problem on one area of decking

2 The First Step - Research

I did lots of research on the Internet and found several forums with many people that had had exactly the same problem. But none seemed to come up with a satisfactory (to me) total solution.

I also looked at the Ronseal product range but could find nothing apparently suitable to remove the Stain. So I emailed Ronseal and asked for their advice. This is the reply: –

“Thank you for your enquiry. Whilst **we do not produce a specific treatment to remove the stain** I hope the advice below will help:

- Any unsound stain must be removed, pressure washing the surface, if available, is the preferred method but wire brushing would be an acceptable alternative. This will also help open up the surface grain making it more receptive to new stain.
- Once the unsound stain is removed, I would recommend that the surface is cleaned with Decking Cleaner. The deck should then be left to thoroughly dry out prior to re-treating.”

Ronseal not having a specific treatment to remove the stain more than annoyed me. Based on my research, **wire brushing was a no-no as it can destroy the wood surface;** so I decided to pressure wash the decking.

As I was heading into unknown territory, I also decided to see what effect each step in the overall process had, before deciding on the next step – this strategy proved to be vitally important.

3 The Second Step – Pressure Washing

The pressure washing took about 4 hours for my 25 square metres of decking, including steps and small walls. You have to be careful not to go too close to the wood otherwise the wood surface may get damaged.

Unfortunately, I did not take a photo immediately after pressure washing, so I will explain **the results:** -

- On the decking planks and the horizontal parts of the balustrade, around 80% of the Ronseal decking stain was removed – a good start
- On the balustrade support posts - except for one surface – and on the balustrade small posts, and the vertical walls, only a small percentage was removed – not so good. The Ronseal Decking Stain obviously had better adherence on vertical areas, where the water rolls off

This left me with two problems: -

- How to remove the 20% stain on the decking planks and the horizontal parts of the balustrade? Getting it all off the U-grooves on the planks would be particularly difficult
- What to do about the balustrade support posts, the balustrade small posts, and the vertical walls?

What I decided to do at this point was: -

- Use a power sander on all exposed horizontal surfaces, but this would leave the U-grooves on the planks still with the problem.
- Leave the balustrade support posts, the balustrade small posts, and the vertical walls, and treat them with something to be defined later

4 The Third Step – Power Sanding Exposed Horizontal Surfaces

Decking Planks

You can see from the photo below that the power sanding completely removed the exposed surfaces' decking stain. There is still some on some of the U-grooves, but thankfully not on all of them.

I would suggest not holding back on the power sanding, which I did a little on the some of decking – these areas ended up being not quite as clean as the areas where I took a little bit more off.

However, the wood colour still looked a bit **sad and worn**.



Horizontal Parts of Balustrade



The horizontal parts of the balustrade, especially the low ones as can be seen above, were a problem in terms of accessing the areas to be sanded. Just persevere and the results are shown below – **a beautiful clean wood surface with natural features.**

The power sanding took about 6 hours of exhausting and backbreaking work.



5 The Fourth Step – More Research

What I now had was reasonably clean decking planks and horizontal parts of the balustrade. But what next?

I took several days out to research and consider the options. I decided to follow what many people were saying - **use oil, as it penetrates the wood and does not sit on the wood surface like water-based stains** - but which oil?

I considered several types, but one that stood out a mile, **the Rolls Royce** quoted by one person, was **Textrol**, manufactured by **Owatrol** – they claim it to be “**Non-film forming – will not crack, peel or flake.**”

I also wanted to try to strip off the remaining Ronseal Deck Stain off all horizontal parts. Owatrol also have **a stripper called Prepdeck**. You need to use eye protection and safety gloves to apply it. There are other industrial strippers that are dangerous to use, so I decided to use Prepdeck.

However, you then need to use Owatrol **Net-trol** to counteract the alkaline effect of Prepdeck. It is also a cleaner.

All this stuff, the stripper, the cleaner and the oil was expensive, but I found that it was 10% cheaper when procured from <http://www.promain.co.uk>

Nevertheless, it would **cost me £193** – this included enough oil for the stated 2 coats. In addition, Owatrol recommend, **for maintenance purposes, one coat every 2 years on horizontal wood** and less for vertical wood – that works out at about **£18 per year**.

The 2 tins per year of Ronseal Decking Stain had cost me £50 each time, so about **£300 in today’s money**, so far. And then **£50 per year forever**, as well as **looking awful each year!**

But before lashing out nearly £200 I decided to try Ronseal Decking Cleaner.

6 The Fifth Step – Using Ronseal Decking Cleaner

As can be seen from the photo below the Ronseal Decking Cleaner had no stripping affect whatsoever! It did clean the wood very slightly, but nothing to shout about. That was £15 down the tubes!



7 The Sixth Step – Go For It!!

I then decided to invest the £193 on Owatrol products from Promain. They arrived a couple of days later. So now I was ready for action on the planks and the horizontal parts of the balustrade.

Using Prepdeck

Initially I wore safety gloves and goggles, but found that the Prepdeck had a consistency like Fairy Liquid, and so brushed on easily, with only a few splashes. It took about 3 hours to cover the decking. Then I power-hosed it off, which took about an hour. As there was a copious soapy lather you have to go over each plank several times, with a delay between each time, as the lather keeps coming back.

The result, below, was **pleasing but not perfect**. There was still a small amount of Decking Stain left in the U-grooves, but the wood was significantly cleaner.



Using Net-trol

The application process, removal and work times were the same as for Prepdeck.

The result, the 2 photos below, was astonishing! There was still a very small amount of Decking Stain in the U-grooves, but the wood was even cleaner than before, and **looked natural**.

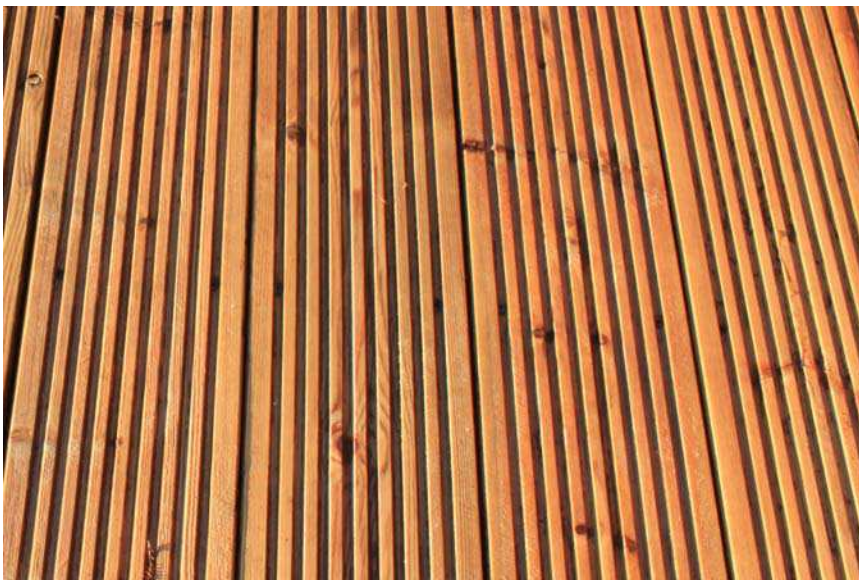




Using Textrol

I poured some Textrol oil out of the tin into a small container to apply it. The tin does not pour well. Using a broad brush the **first application sucked up the oil**, and took about 5 hours. The second layer went on easier, **took less oil**, and was completed in about 3 hours.

The result, below, was a **gorgeous golden brown** with all the **wood knots showing**. This will fade a bit with time.



8 The Seventh Step - the balustrade support posts, the balustrade small posts, and the vertical walls

What to do with these tricky items?

I had in the back of my mind that, as autumn was drawing to a close, I could replace the small posts, and power-sand the support posts next year, prior to any new treatment. But that would be a major construction task and they definitely needed attention this year. And the small walls would still be a problem.

I decided to keep them all brown, but what would I use to cover them? I discovered that – wait for it – Ronseal did a 5-year Decking Stain that cost only £2 more for a 750ml tin than the ordinary Stain, so I decided to try it. I could still revert to the above plan if it failed.

As I started to apply it I found that applying the 5-year Stain at the intersection of the small posts and the oiled horizontal parts of the balustrade was difficult and very time consuming. So I decided to apply the 5-year Stain to the Textrol-covered horizontal parts of the balustrade as well.

The 5-year Stain goes on, and looks, like a varnish – and it is much clearer than Ronseal ordinary Decking Stain. The time for this task was about 4 hours. I later applied a second coat to the areas that required it – that took about 2 hours.

As for the result of applying the 5-year Stain on top of Textrol on the horizontal parts of the balustrade – see photo below.



Natural features stand out - truly amazing!!

9 The Completed Decking

The overall decking has been rejuvenated, and **looks like new** – see photo below.



10 Conclusions

- Ordinary Ronseal decking stain does **not** do what it says on the tin, and Ronseal's products and advice on its removal is inadequate
- Spend money now to avoid costly maintenance in the future, and ugly looking decking forever - use the best stripper, cleaner and oil you can get
- The research, effort and time you put into the task will be large – but don't be put off by the journey, the end result will be worth it!
- I hope that next summer I will still be singing the praises of what I have done!

----- The end -----