

7 Steps to decide which Composite deck is for you



It can be a bit of minefield deciding which decking to bring into your garden, and your life. In recent years a multitude of different types have come to the forefront, and it is understandably confusing where to begin.

10 years ago, there were just 10 choices, whereas now there are over 50 different products available. The hardest choice is choosing between styles, colours and brands. In this article, I attempt to give you some food for thought on why composite decking may be the choice for you.

Know your budget

There are many options now on the market catering for every budget but it is important that you understand that investing in composite should last you years as it is impervious to rot traditionally associated with wooden decking, but do be careful as you get what you pay for, some cheaper and thinner composite boards can fail after a few years, this can be accelerated if poorly fitted and the sub frame is not strong enough to cope.

Is your decking used in extreme heat

If the answer is yes, do not go for a particularly dark coloured or dense composite, as these can really heat up in the sun and increase the likelihood of warping. Consider choosing between different coloured composite samples and place them outside, and seeing whether they fit into your surroundings.

Is your decking used in extreme rain ?

This is perhaps a question that may be more of a consideration than the former. If the composite deck is subjected to frequent adverse weather, and is smooth-textured, then it can get slippery (but is not nearly as vulnerable as the traditional wooden variety). If you are going to use the deck near a swimming pool, look for a pronounced texture for your composite decking.

Is wood a deal-breaker ?

The more expensive composite brands have finer details, more features and colours they have more flexibility, but this can come at a cost. Higher end Composite boards have a superior grain, and come with an extra layer of polymer this are called capped Composite decking and this comes with a wooden effect, and some even ensure that each board is slightly different to the last. Some manufacturers buff each board at the factory, to remove any plastic look. All these add-ons make your deck more bespoke and unique, but if the deck is made just for you, expect the cost to increase.

What fasteners should I Choose ?

The decking does not just stick together, they are secured usually by using hidden fixings most common are two types plastic or stainless steel, the latter is obviously more expensive but is usually stronger than the plastic variant and on that basis last longer, cheaper compounds used in plastic clips can become brittle over time and snap so again shop wisely for a good quality clip.

Make sure it is all sound

It is very important when installing composite decking that the sub structure is strong enough to take the weight of composite which is denser than wood and that the span between joists is no more than what the manufacturers advise, and if you know heavy items like planters are to be placed on your deck further supporting will be required otherwise the boards will deform.

And please read the installation instruction paying particular attention to expansion gaps these are critical in composite due to having a plastic composite they will expand and contract with temperature different to wood.

It is not just about the decking

Composite decking boards basically install themselves (with a little help from some basic tools). The decking itself is only a piece in the jigsaw of your overall budget and design. Each design will likely need hidden fasteners or deck screws.

You may also need end caps, reinforcement pieces, skirt pieces or add ons like railings or posts. Be aware of what you are getting into and ensure you have the best idea of your ideal deck.

General installation tips

When you install the decking, it is important to leave adequate spacing between the boards to allow water to drain effectively, whilst also conforming to your design Composite decking products are very stable in width, but shrink and swell slightly as the seasons progress.

In areas where decking is subjected to wet weather, or there is plenty of buildup from leaves, it is advisable to protect the top of the joists from moisture.

Finally enjoy your new composite decking you will find it worth it.

For advice or questions on any area of we also offer [Free Composite Decking Samples](#) to customers so let us know if you would like a free sample pack.