

Composite lumber is popular for any backyard living space. When used on a deck, composite decking is low-maintenance, durable, and eco-friendly. This manufactured material comes in a wide variety of materials and finishes to suit any home design. Timber and decking experts break down the benefits, average costs, cleaning, and maintenance considerations for anyone thinking of making a switch to composite decking.



What Is Composite Decking?

[Composite decking](#) is made of artificial materials rather than real timber. Design Hub Store in Birkirkara, explains composite decking is an umbrella term that includes materials manufactured with an engineered mix of ingredients that blend wood fibers with inorganic materials, like plastic and bonding agents. Design Hub Store, adds that composite decking is usually made from 100% polymer or organic wood and plastic. Although composite decking is artificial, many of the matters are recycled.

There are several types of composite decking options available that offer a range of benefits. Composite decking is more durable than traditional wood decking. It won't splinter, crack, or peel as it ages. Composite decking requires much less maintenance because the materials never need to be stained, sanded, or sealed. Composite decking is fade-resistant, stain-resistant, and moisture-resistant.

This means there's no mold, mildew, or rot. The composite decking material is usually covered by a protective warranty from the manufacturer. If wood tends to warp and degrade in the outdoor climate around your home, then composite decking might be an ideal choice.

If you think you'll have the same setup for many years to come, composite decking is an ideal building material. If you'd like to change the finishes, shape, or features over time, maybe not.

Decks are more than just a functional addition to any house where you can spend summer afternoons with friends and family; they are also a great way to increase the value of your home.

Once the decision has been made to install a deck for your home or commercial property, there are a few choices available regarding the material you use to build your deck. As technology advances, more and more decking options, especially planet-friendly alternatives, become available to the Malta market; composite decking, timber decking are all great contenders.

Composite decking is a combination of recycled wood and plastic, making it non-toxic, durable, and water resistant. The combination of wood and plastic gives you the best of both worlds – the durability of plastic and the aesthetic appeal of timber – to create the highest quality decking product that is both functional and long-lasting.

UNDENIABLE ADVANTAGES OF COMPOSITE

As with anything, there are both advantages and disadvantages to composite decking. Using composite material often costs more up front, yet long term costs are lower than with timber, as maintenance and installation costs can be far less than other decking options.

Compared to wood, waterproof composite stands up to the elements much better, needing little more than regular cleaning to keep in tip-top condition. With a wood deck, splinters are a concern, as is making sure it is regularly treated. A composite deck eliminates both of those concerns, along with the often-unavoidable warping of wood planks.

As with any outdoor installation, termites and elemental damages are something to consider – with composite decking; you can say goodbye to these issues; composite decking is designed to combat the main issues that timbers are susceptible to. In other words, you can “get the beautiful timber look, without the timber hassle”.

INSTALLATION PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

After you decide if you will be installing the deck or if you will be hiring a deck installer or contractor, it's time to get building.

The elements involved in a deck building project can be broken down into five easy steps. These include planning, measuring, framing, securing and laying.

1. PLAN & DESIGN

The first step to building any deck is to figure out how much material is needed, where the deck is going, and gather all tools and materials required. Something to consider is to choose darker composite material that will retain heat and get hotter; if you like to be barefoot or if your deck will be under direct sunlight, choosing a lighter color or mixture of colors will make the deck more enjoyable.

2. MEASURE & POUR

Measure the area where the deck will be and begin setting a strong foundation. Use a post hole digger to dig the holes needed for the deck footings. Pour concrete in and allow it to cure for at least 24 hours.

3. FRAME

While waiting, install the ledger board to the house to secure the deck to the house. Once the concrete has cured, attach post anchors the stirrups to the deck footings. Alternatively, you can cast them into concrete as you go. The KlevaKlip adjustable bearer supports are perfect for fine-tuning and make the deck perfectly level once the concrete has cured. Then attach posts or bearers directly to the stirrups. Frame your deck out, adding concrete footings, depending on the size of the deck.

On both the ledger board and end beam, install joist hangers at the desired intervals, approximately every 15.24 cm. Cut the joist boards to fit and install them by seating the boards into the hangers and securing them with nails. Ensure you are plumbing often, checking the level and adjusting as necessary.

4. SECURE

Ensure that your deck is leveled; this should be leveled from the beginning by using consistent sizes for your subframes. Using a chalk line can help you find the high spots to grind down.

Seal any joints or areas at risk of high moisture with a compound. Using joist protection like GTape over the top edge of the joists can also help protect the deck from long term rot – choose a dark tape color to avoid drawing attention away from your decking.

5. LAY

Once your foundation is in place and stable, it's time to lay down the deck boards. Use the applicable manufacturer's proprietary fixing system. Different brands of the composite have different fixing methods. From top fixing screws that 'disappear' through the top surface, to 'biscuit type' or strip click-in strips both of which produce secret or concealed fixing.

Butt joints are best avoided with composite decking because of the significant thermal movement that occurs daily. Use full-length boards with feature or breaker boards to 'hide' the necessary expansion joints. The best time to set this up correctly is in the planning stage where you can, if possible, design the deck to be the same size as the available boards. Helping save a massive amount of time and material wastage and in turn, save money.

OPTIONAL: INSTALLING ADD-ONS

The last step is to add deck balustrades, lighting or stairs. Start balustrade posts 6 centimeters away from the house to prevent moisture build-up.