

# Smart Words for Smart Homeowners

THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERTS AND THEIR ADVICE ON RELEVANT HOMEOWNER TOPICS

## Capping Splintered Deck Rails: A Permanent Solution

### Splinters! Ugly, Twisted Rail Caps.

Many well constructed, strong wood decks have the same shard and splinter malady; their top rails - the cap rail - is splintering and looks horrible. And the hand rail that you hold for climbing the stairs is also splintering and offers - for safety sake - not a very inviting grip.

### No More Handrails That Hurt

Next time you are cleaning, staining and refinishing your deck why not take care of these problems and provide a permanent solution that eliminates splinters. This remedy will enhance your deck's appearance and give you a level, flat place to sit a summer iced tea glass. It will also give you a hand rail that works as a comfortable safety device. And it will last for many years.

### The Procedure is simple

Gander at the few pictures presented in this essay. You'll get an idea of the targets of your labor and the opportunities to eliminate the splinter dilemma.

### Removing Any Twisted Wood Cap Boards

Any wood deck caps that are twisted must be removed and replaced with straight Pressure Treated [PT] boards. These wood boards are the foundation for your new AZEK® caps so if the wood boards are twisted the new Permanent PVC capping boards will not be flat.

### Dry-Fit The AZEK® Flat Trim Boards

One of the first operations you'll perform is to dry-fit all the AZEK® components in their final position. They should all be cut, pre-drilled, counter sunk, assembled and inspected for perfection. This step ensures that the final assembly goes quickly and efficiently because you'll be working with fast curing glue.

Place all the AZEK® flat stock boards onto their intended surfaces. Look at the ends that will butt against the

house. Pull that end away from the house leaving  $\approx 1/2''$  space. You don't want the two surfaces rubbing, sliding and abrading against each other.

### Cut The Corner Angles

Measure the length needed and cut 45 degree mitered angles for each outside corner that you'll eventually join with screws and AZEK® glue. You'll mate them, screw them together and glue them during the final assembly process... but not right now. Dry-Fit and screw these together.

### Brace Mitered Corners With A Fabricated "L"

You'll need to cut an "L" shaped bottom brace from the AZEK® stock. This will support the corner and keep the miter from moving in the heat of the summer sun. It will be screwed from the bottom and glued to the two mitered mating corners from beneath. Dry-Fit and screw these together under the mitered corners.

Complete the router operation

Now that all the new AZEK® caps are dry-fit and partially screwed in place tightly you can set up a router with a round over bit. Your objective is to route the tops of all the new caps so they are not sharp and have a friendly, well-groomed radius. On the deck cap route the outside [the edge facing the yard] and the inside [the edge facing the house] of the new top cap. The radius should be  $\approx 3/8''$ . Route the top and bottom of the hand rail cap also because it will be grabbed.



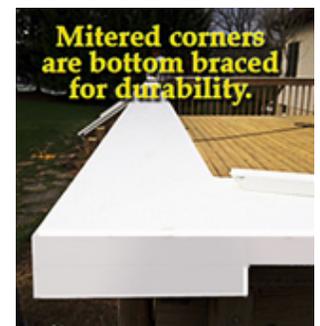
Wherever possible screws should be placed in the least visible locations.



Secure alignment & position with clamps



This corner brace is screwed & glued under each corner.



## Glue And Screw Corners

Now that you are sure all the pieces and sections will all work together and that all the cutting and edging operations are finished it is time to assemble and install your new system permanently.

Using AZEK® glue, apply glue to one side of the mitered edges then the other. Join mated ends of the mitered edges with a single screw. If this screw pulls them together properly, insert another screw on the other end. Secure the screws tightly. Wipe away any glue that appears on the surface with a damp rag.

Glue the top of the corner brace. Apply it to the bottom of each mitered corner. Line it up so that the faces are flush. Screw it to its mate with two screws inserted from the bottom.

## Fill Holes With Phenoseal

You will have created a dozen or so screw holes during the countersink and screwing process. Now is the time to seal the screw heads and make the obvious fasteners disappear. Use Phenoseal to cap these screw heads and fill the indents. A dab of Phenoseal [white] into the hole then immediately slide a wet putty knife over the hole to force the sealer into the hole and flatten the caulk sealer. With a damp rag wipe the excess residue from the AZEK® flat board.



## Awards For Superior Results

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**2007, 2008  
2009, 2010  
2011, 2012  
2013**

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- ✓ Morris, parts of Sussex, Warren

**You'll Be Delighted With The Results!**

## Items You'll Need

1" x 5 1/2" AZEK® . Buy enough to cover the full length of deck caps and any hand rail caps you intend to cover.

Deck Screws. Stainless with cut front threads steel are best. You can use exterior coated deck screws or AZEK screws. Be sure to use the correct lengths for counter sinking.

AZEK Glue. [No substitute]

A good counter sink & drill bit.

Tube of white Phenoseal. [No substitute]

Router & round-over bit.

## Call Ron

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