



Juniper Decking

Best Practices for Installation



Juniper is an extraordinarily durable wood that is ideal for exterior applications like decking. An ongoing OSU study has shown it to **last longer outdoors than any other Northwestern species of wood**, and it is remarkably beautiful. To get the best results from your juniper deck installation, we recommend reading these guidelines prior to starting your project to help you learn the material and ensure the best results.

These guidelines were developed with the advice and support of Portland contractor Walt Quade, who has successfully installed many juniper decks and has acquired good methods for working with this material.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

1. Know your material: Sorting the wood pile and familiarizing yourself with the material on hand is the best way to begin your project. Start by inspecting each piece of lumber to determine which side looks better. Juniper lumber is more variable than other species. Also, any imperfect boards can be reserved for stair treads, trim, or other applications that allow you to cut around the imperfections.

Juniper by nature has a lot of character, so inspect each piece of wood for knots, dips, and voids, and make sure you place these boards in areas where this character will enhance rather than detract from the finished appearance of the deck.

2. Pre-drill: Juniper is very hard, much harder than cedar or redwood decking, so pre-drilling every board is recommended.

DURING INSTALLATION



Juniper decking can be installed 16" or 24" on center. The deck shown here has been installed 24" on center.

3. Choose the right tools: Walt recommends using a 3" decking screw with a square head drive, which will allow you to make adjustments easily, without damaging the wood (as nails can), and will also allow you make adjustments months or years down the road more easily than a Phillips head tends to allow.



4. Make your plan: Walt suggests laying all the boards out, then securing them with one screw at each end and one in the middle prior to fully installing the deck. This way the pattern and spacing can be worked out and any adjustments made more easily than when each piece has been fully secured to all the joists below. Walt uses home-made spacers (see *photo at left*) to line the boards up at the right distance.

5. Straighten the crook: With juniper, some boards will show crooking, so installers will need to ease these boards straight prior to fully securing them to the joists. Walt's method is to set each board down and use his spacers, one at each end of the new board, to adjust it to the right distance. Then put one screw in each end of the board, as detailed above.

Place the next board using the same technique with the spacers, and then go back to the crooked board and gently pry the center into a straight line using a **Wonderbar or similar tool** (see *photo at right*). Then add a screw to the center to secure it to the joist below, and move on to the next board.



For the last step, go back and pre-drill two holes in all deck boards for each joist. Then place a screw in each hole down into the joist below to securely fasten the deck down.

AFTER INSTALLATION

6. Finish your work: Holes, voids, and unwanted knots can be filled post-installation, if desired. Walt has found that a 2-part epoxy works well for this. He colors it with concrete stain to help it match the tone of the deck and recommends always making the filler slightly darker than the surrounding wood.

Juniper also takes well to stains and sealers, if desired. While juniper is extremely long-lasting and can last for decades outside without any additional coatings, it is always a good idea to protect your work and your investment by finishing the wood with an environmentally-friendly deck stain or sealer. Those with an added tint, like TimberPro UV, can help maintain the wood's color and slow the natural graying process. Taking this care will stretch your new deck's lifespan even further.



Juniper Allowances:

- Crooking of up to 1" over 8' – All juniper decking is sorted for acceptable crooking prior to leaving warehouse. The crook can be adjusted by screwing wood down
- Minor bowing that can be adjusted by screwing wood down
- Minor knots and holes on A face that can be filled as desired after installation
- Slightly larger knots, holes, and voids on B face