



CARE & MAINTENANCE

Cleaning and Maintaining Aluminum Outdoor Furniture

Aluminum is popular metal used in outdoor furniture for many reasons. It is durable, versatile, and requires very little care on the part of the owner. It is commonly known that aluminum generally does not rust. There is a unique science behind this carefree material. When exposed to air, aluminum will develop a microscopic layer of oxide on its exterior. This oxide layer acts as a barrier which protects the metal from the elements and prevents corrosion. This quality is the most appealing characteristic when it comes to choosing a material for making outdoor furniture. It will weather any climate and any amount of precipitation. Aluminum patio furniture is a dependable option for outdoor living.

There are three different types of aluminum construction for outdoor furniture: Wrought Aluminum, Tubular Aluminum and Cast Aluminum. Wrought Aluminum furniture is usually used to create furniture Victorian in style that similar to styles also found in most wrought iron outdoor pieces. Tubular aluminum techniques in furniture are most common as it is the lightest and easiest to shape and form. Cast Aluminum outdoor furniture is made using a process, called casting, where molten aluminum is poured into a mold. This process produces the most pure and resilient aluminum. Cast Aluminum outdoor furniture is cast in pieces and then welded together, which seals out water and the elements. As cast aluminum is solid, the resulting product is much heavier than wrought and tubular aluminum furniture.

Aluminum furniture does not need to be covered or protected the way that wood furniture may need to be. However, some aluminum furniture comes with a powder-coating. This gives the aluminum color and helps to reduce the aluminum being scratched and dented. This coating often has great visual appeal as well as giving strength to the oxide layer, however, it does require a little extra care to maintain the original appearance. The coating, while protective and durable, can be scratched by a reckless owner or be eroded by harsh, salty environments. It is important to consider this possibility to maintain reasonable expectations of your cast aluminum furniture.

Quick Tips:

You need to know that aluminum will not rust and this is what makes it perfect for outdoor furniture. But, aluminum will get affected by pollution in the air and water and its surface will discolor or become rough. Though aluminum does not rust it does oxidize which can result in discoloration, but will not affect the structural reliability of the metal.

Here are helpful hints for the care of aluminum outdoor furniture:

"If you notice that there is slight discoloration on your aluminum furniture, then it should be washed with mild soap and warm water. It helps to add a gentle natural acid like lime or lemon juice, vinegar or cream of tartar. Important! Do not add ammonia, TSP or Soda. Always do this cleaning after the change of seasons.

- "If the aluminum has become pitted or is rough to the touch, it can be polished. Smooth the surface with steel wool and soap as a cleanser and lubricant. Remember to remove all traces and residue of the steel wool from the surface of your aluminum outdoor furniture or else it can rust and stain the surface of the aluminum. **Do not use this technique on powder coated aluminum!**
- If the aluminum is stubbornly dirty, there is a wide range of commercial cleaners available at your local hardware store that can be used. Remember not to use commercial cleaners on anodized aluminum.
- You can also use a coat of auto wax or silicon spray to protect your aluminum outdoor furniture from corroding and pitting.
- **If your aluminum outdoor furniture is colored, anodized aluminum then take extra care to use only mild detergent and water to wash it.**