

Get Creative with Reclaimed Wood

Sources for Salvaging Old Wood

- Before you throw out that old piece of furniture, check to see if it might contain wood that is worth the time and effort to salvage. Hardwood and softwood pieces, and even plywood, are just waiting for your creative ideas.
- Residential construction and remodeling sites can be a treasure trove. If requested politely, many residential contractors will allow you to poke through their dumpsters and scrap.
- Discarded wooden pallets are a good source of scrap wood for DIY projects. There is typically a lot of work involved in removing nails and disassembling pallets, so look for pallets in relatively good condition and avoid stained, painted, dirty, or broken pieces.



Handling Reclaimed Wood

- Safety is a priority when salvaging and working with old lumber. In addition to things like rusty nails and screws, old wood can contain lots of dirt, mold, bacteria, and bugs.

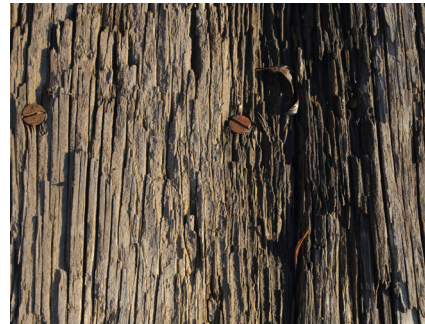
Make sure to use proper safety equipment and take precautions. Thick gloves, protective clothing, eye protection, and even a dust mask are good essentials, especially when sorting through scrap piles or construction dumpsters.



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Preparing Reclaimed Wood

- Begin by removing all nails, screws, and hardware. Keep in mind that there may be some you can't see with the naked eye. Use a magnet, or ideally a small metal detector to locate any remaining metal fragments. A claw hammer and small pry bar are the best tools for removing nails, though screwdrivers and strong pliers can also come in handy. There are times you might have to drill out stubborn hardware or fasteners as well.



- Wood that has been exposed to the elements or stored outside will likely be covered in dirt and dust. After removing all metals, use a brass bristle brush (typically found in the paint aisle of hardware stores) to remove this debris before sanding or sawing. Run a shop vacuum over the wood to remove loose particles.
- After brushing, use a rough (60 or 80-grit) sandpaper to remove any stubborn dirt, stain, or finish.
- Square up any ragged edges or uneven ends with a circular or mitre saw, and you now have reclaimed stock ready to reuse!

Inspiration and Instructions

- Pinterest is a popular source for project ideas. You'll find many boards there for DIY reclaimed wood, recycled wood, or scrap wood projects. If you already have an idea of what you'd like to make, an internet search should yield plenty of information you can use. To get you started:

WebEcoist compiled a list of [15 furniture and decor projects](#) based on pallets, with links to instructions and walkthroughs.

Houzz.com includes numerous DIY projects incorporating [scrap wood](#).

ScrapHacker.com is a blog for [re-use ideas and inspiration](#) using all kinds of materials.

Apartment Therapy's list of [49 Creative Reuse Ideas](#) includes projects involving wood as well as other items around the house.