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Keep clean-up a breeze this barbecue season

There's nothing better than firing up the grill and enjoying your summertime favourites on the patio. But even if your next barbecue masterpiece is finger-licking good, it can still leave a mess.

Spend less time on prep and clean-up and more time enjoying the season with these easy backyard barbecue tips, courtesy of the Canadian paper towel brand, Royale Tiger Towel:

- Save trips back and forth to the kitchen. Use a sturdy tray or condiment caddy to carry your favourite toppings, cutlery and napkins in one trip.
- Don't let spills and messes build up on the outside of your barbecue. As soon as the surface cools, spray it with barbecue-friendly cleaner and wipe with a paper towel. Do the same for any work surfaces and patio furniture.
- Corn on the cob is a staple for many backyard meals, but removing the silk can be tough. Make it easy by running a moistened paper towel over the kernels after the husk has been removed.
- Keep paper towels secure and within reach by attaching the holder to the bottom of a picnic table. Then, just pop in a roll as needed.
- Help create a non-stick surface and reduce the mess that's left behind after grilling by dipping a paper towel in a small amount of oil, holding it with metal tongs and carefully rubbing it over the barbecue grate.
- Quickly chill drinks by wrapping a bottle or can with a wet paper towel and sticking it in the freezer for approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Just keep track of the time to ensure drinks don't freeze all the way to avoid an unwanted mess.

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All hands on deck

Summer is here and you are looking at your deck or patio and wondering how much longer it's going to last.

Is it starting to splinter? Are the stones rough and painful to walk on? How are you going to find the time or money to fix it without cutting into your free time or without blowing the budget? It's no secret that a deck replacement is a big investment – one many of us like to avoid where possible. So, before you dig into your wallet or get out the sledge hammer, make sure you've explored your options.

First, start by checking your deck or patio carefully to make sure the structural integrity is sound. Improving the look of a deck that is damaged won't extend its life. The same goes for a path or patio that has heaved excessively over the winter or is full of puddles after it rains. In those cases, a more significant repair, or replacement, is needed.

A Small Repair

Sometimes the entire deck isn't in need of an update, just certain trouble spots. In this case, there's no reason to do an overhaul – just a simple touch up is needed. For

example, if you're experiencing cracks in cement or divots in your wood, there are a number of filler solutions available today that can help combat these issues.

A Fresh Look

If your wooden deck is still structurally sound but visibly in need of help, it may be time to consider a fresh stain. When taking on a stain project be sure to properly prep and finish your surfaces – cleaning and sanding prior to staining, and using a quality clear coat or sealer following application, will provide the best results and longer-lasting protection.

A Firm Fix

If your deck is beyond simple beautification, but structurally sound, the answer may be to 'restore' it.

New products available on the market such as Restore (by Rust-Oleum) are allowing homeowners to update the look and durability of their decks without having to replace. And what most people love is that it's thicker than most other deck coatings, allowing it to be applied right onto existing surfaces without stripping or sealing.

"Restore is an advanced coating designed to reinvigorate your



wooden decks, concrete patios and even vertical surfaces such as retaining walls," says Lawrence Genga, the senior director of marketing and research and development at Rust-Oleum Consumer

Brands Canada. "Its thick application fills in imperfections, locks down splinters, and provides lasting protection against moisture and the damaging effects of the sun. It's also slip-resistant."

With product options like this, you can be sure that a deck or patio restoration will be at the top of every 'honey-do' list this summer.

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