

1. Each can of KiwiGrip comes with at least one roller.
2. After taping off the area, apply the KiwiGrip and spread it with a notched trowel.
3. Using the roller, roll the KiwiGrip in all directions until the texture is even.
4. After rolling out the KiwiGrip, remove the tape quickly to avoid having to touch up the edges.
5. The finished surface has nice clean edges.

# Get a Grip



## Another approach to renewing worn nonskid

By Mary Broderick and Stephen Perry

**W**hen our Pearson 28 sailboat turned 30, we began researching nonskid renewal options. Nonskid wears gradually and renewing it can be expensive and time-consuming, so many owners ignore the problem as long as possible.

We needed a nonskid surface that would provide good traction on a slippery, slanted deck but wasn't too aggressive on body parts. We also wanted something that was durable and easy to clean. Of course, it had to look good, too.

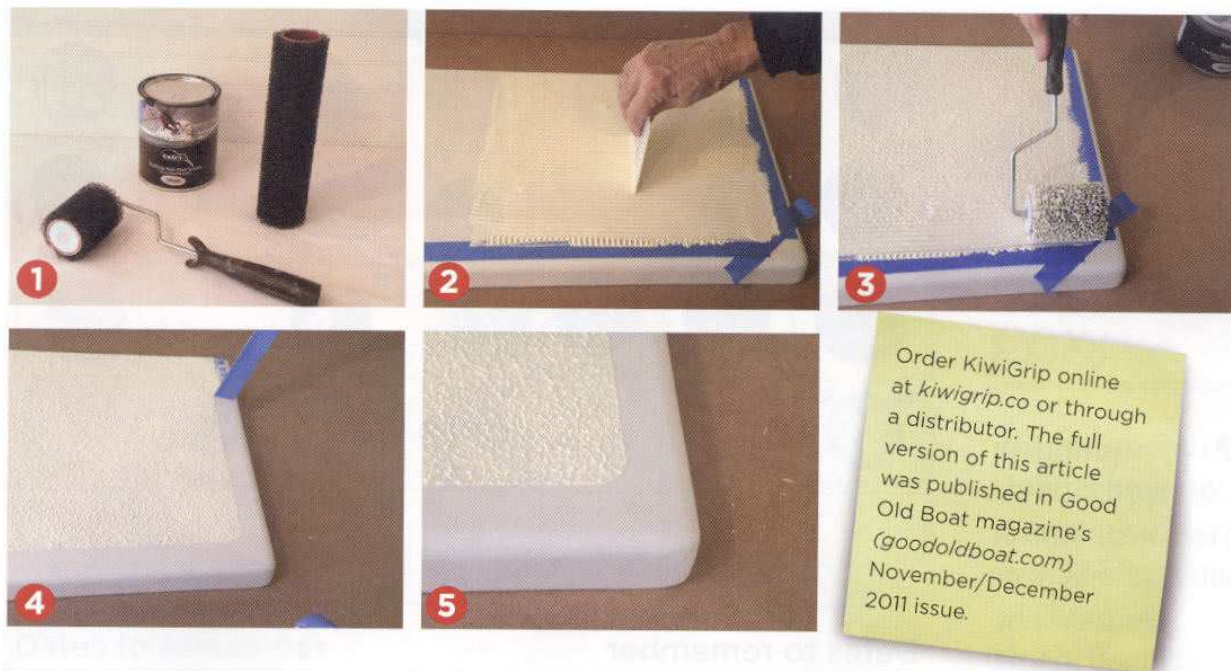
Marine nonskid products fall into two broad categories: manufactured sheet materials and paints employing nonskid additives. Manufactured sheet materials come in various sizes and molded-in patterns and are cut to fit. Some materials such as Treadmaster must be applied with adhesives; others, like Sea Dek, come as peel-and-stick sheets. Many paints can

be mixed with additives like ground walnut shells or sand to achieve a random grippy surface; some can also be modified with thickeners and rolled to achieve a stippled surface.

To achieve good results, both approaches require prep work, some skill and patience. The sheet materials promised a professional-looking surface and durability, but we were concerned with the difficulty of repairing individual sections. The paint products also promised professional results and might be easier to repair. While weighing the pros and cons of both methods, we discovered a product called KiwiGrip that employed a third approach.

**A one-part pre-thickened acrylic paint**, KiwiGrip gets its anti-skid properties when applied with a special roller that creates a stippled pattern similar to factory-molded nonskid. With no need to mix in a non-skid additive, you avoid two





problems: uneven distribution of the additive and duplication of the nonskid pattern if repairs are needed later. Personal experience has taught us to be skeptical about anything that looks too easy, but we thought this product deserved a closer look.

**We decided to give KiwiGrip a trial run in a small area.** We started with the cockpit seats because they are small rectangular patterns that would be easy to mask and roll out quickly. If it didn't look good, we could wipe off the material before it set. The instructions supplied with the product were clear, and the U.S. distributor provided some practical tips plus a little moral support.

**We chose a weather window carefully.** It was August, and we wanted a day with moderate humidity and no rain forecast for 48 hours. A windless day would be ideal to keep dust and debris off the freshly painted surfaces. Before applying the product, we shielded the cockpit area from the sun with tarps because acrylics can dry quickly, and warm decks accelerate drying time. This can affect adhesion as well as the appearance of the finished surface.

**After washing and drying the cockpit seats,** we masked off the areas to be coated, keeping close to the margins of the existing nonskid and pressing the tape down firmly to prevent the KiwiGrip from bleeding under the edge.

We mixed the paint thoroughly and poured a small amount into a paint tray. Using a 3-inch brush, Steve dropped several piles of the KiwiGrip on the first panel and spread it with the notched trowel. Then using the roller, he slowly rolled the

area in all directions as if he were painting a wall. When the texture was even, we proceeded to the next panel.

**After the second panel,** the brush got slightly crusty from the paint drying too quickly. I cleaned the trowel, roller and brush in fresh water and set them aside to dry. When we removed the tape, a bit of paint stuck to it where several thin spots along the edges had dried more quickly than the rest. We touched up those spots and removed the tape promptly on the two remaining panels, producing a nice clean edge.

Several days later, we returned to the boat and carefully looked everything over. Once KiwiGrip has cured, you can lightly sand areas where the stipple pattern is too pronounced. For more grip, roll the paint after it gets a little tacky to increase the stipple. The new nonskid can be walked on without shoes after 24 hours; soft-sole shoes may be used after two days. The product continues to cure over several weeks.

We still had almost half a quart of KiwiGrip left, so on a 60-degree October day, we repeated the process on the cockpit sole. The lower air temperature extended our working time, and the result was indistinguishable from what we had done before. We enjoyed several weeks of sailing with our new nonskid, and the following spring, we renewed the rest of the nonskid on our Pearson. ☼

*Mary Broderick and Stephen Perry, of Westchester Sail & Power Squadron, hold USCG Masters licenses and have sailed coastal New England waters for more than 20 years. They are currently restoring a Nicholson 35 sailboat and planning an extended cruise.*