



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Cleaning Your Home's Exterior

Maintaining a clean exterior not only enhances your home's curb appeal but also helps prevent long-term damage. Here's a guide to cleaning four key areas.



1 Siding: Start by rinsing your siding with a garden hose to remove loose dirt and debris. Mix a mild detergent with water in a bucket, or use a siding-specific cleaner for tougher stains. Apply the solution with a long-handled brush, scrubbing gently to avoid damage. Rinse thoroughly with the hose, working from top to bottom. Consider using a pressure washer on a low setting for stubborn mold or mildew.

2 Windows: Clean windows improve your view and let more light into your home. Use a mixture of water and dish soap or a commercial window cleaner. Apply the solution with a sponge or cloth, and then use a squeegee to remove excess liquid, starting from the top and working downward. For hard-to-reach exterior windows, consider using an extension pole. Remember to clean the window frames and sills, as well.

3 Patio or deck: Begin by sweeping your patio or deck to remove leaves, dirt and other debris. For wooden decks, use a wood cleaner and a scrub brush to tackle stains and mildew. Rinse thoroughly with a hose or pressure washer. For patios made of stone or concrete, a mixture of water and a mild detergent should suffice. Scrub the surface with a stiff broom and rinse well. Regular maintenance can prevent buildup.

4 Roof: Cleaning your roof helps prevent moss and algae growth, which can cause damage over time. Start by removing any debris, such as leaves and branches. For cleaning, use a roof-safe cleaner and a soft-bristled brush to gently scrub away stains. Avoid pressure washing, as it can damage shingles. Ensure proper safety measures are in place, or consider hiring a professional for a thorough and safe cleaning.

Replacing Your Washer and Dryer

Replacing your washing machine and dryer is a significant investment, and selecting the right appliances can enhance your home's efficiency and maximize convenience. Here are five things homeowners should consider when making this important decision.



Energy efficiency: Look for appliances with the ENERGY STAR label, which indicates they meet stringent energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Energy-efficient models consume less water and electricity.

Capacity: Assess your household's laundry needs to determine the appropriate capacity. Larger families or those who frequently wash bulky items like comforters may benefit from high-capacity machines, while smaller households might prefer standard sizes.

Features and technology: Modern washers and dryers have advanced features such as steam cleaning, smart technology and multiple cycle options. Consider which features align with your laundry habits.

Space and installation: Measure your laundry area carefully before purchasing new appliances. Ensure there is enough space for the machines and consider additional requirements, such as ventilation or plumbing. Stackable units might be ideal for smaller spaces, while side-by-side models work well in larger rooms.

Cost and warranty: Evaluate the price of the appliances in relation to your budget, but also consider the long-term value. Savings on utility bills can offset higher upfront costs for energy-efficient models. Additionally, check the warranty and service agreements to protect your investment.



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How to Add a Filter to Your Sink

Installing a water filter on your sink is a simple home improvement project that can significantly improve the taste and quality of your drinking water. Here are a few steps to follow when adding a filter to your sink.

1 Choose the right filter:

There are various types on the market, including faucet-mounted, countertop and under-sink models. Determine which type suits your needs and kitchen layout. For this guide, we'll focus on an under-sink filter, which offers effective filtration without taking up counter space.

2 Gather supplies: You'll need the water filter kit, a wrench, plumber's tape, a bucket and safety goggles. Ensure you have all components from the kit, including the filter, hoses and connectors.

3 Turn off the water supply:

Locate the shut-off valves under your sink and turn off the cold water supply. Turn on the faucet to release any remaining water. Place a bucket under the pipes to catch any drips during the installation.

4 Install the filter:

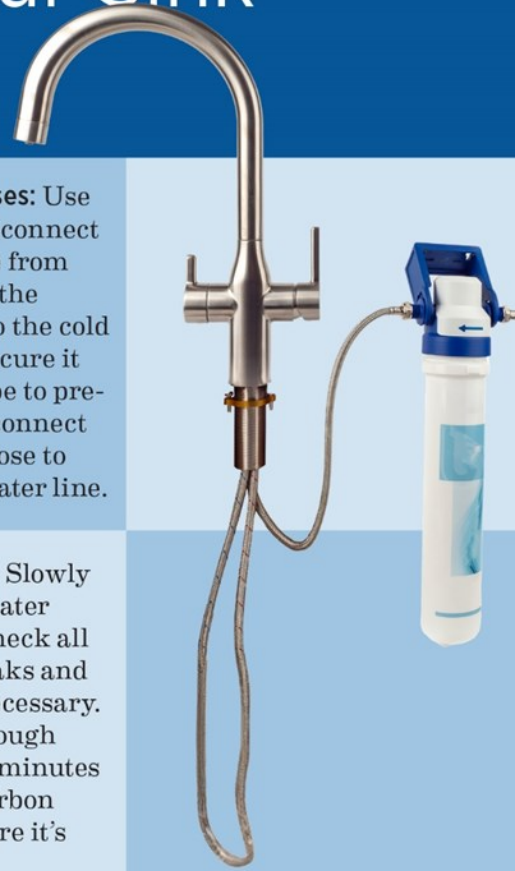
Attach the filter unit to the side of the cabinet under the sink using the provided screws. Ensure it's positioned for easy access when it's time to replace the filter cartridge.

5 Connect the hoses:

Use a wrench to disconnect the cold water line from the faucet. Attach the filter's inlet hose to the cold water valve and secure it with plumber's tape to prevent leaks. Then, connect the filter's outlet hose to the faucet's cold water line.

6 Check for leaks:

Slowly turn the cold water supply back on. Check all connections for leaks and tighten them as necessary. Run the water through the filter for a few minutes to flush out any carbon particles and ensure it's working correctly.



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