



Powerwashing the exterior of the home can be an effective way to clean it in the spring and fall.

Powerwashing, also known as pressure-washing, utilizes a high-velocity water spray to remove dirt and residue from the exterior surfaces of a home. It is frequently used on vinyl siding, concrete and sometimes wood decks to treat mildew and other growth that accumulates over time. Powerwashing can be a great way to remove grime without having to scrub by hand. But it requires a delicate touch to get it right.

Sometimes it is best to leave the job to professionals. But homeowners willing to give it a go can try powerwashing themselves, as various stores rent power washers. The home improvement website ImproveNet says that, until very recently, pressure washers were almost exclusively commercial machines sold to professionals or rented to do-it-yourselfers. Lately manufacturers have targeted homeowners looking to buy

with lightweight options. For those who see powerwashing as a routine venture, purchasing a unit may be worth the investment. It is important to exercise caution when operating a powerwashing machine. The high-velocity spray can tear through skin. It is key to get a feel for the washer, and try less pressure first to get a handle on the magnitude of the tool. Don safety gear prior to us-

ing a pressure washer. Gloves, eye protection and ear protection can be handy. Most units will connect to a standard garden hose. Choose old clothing and expect to get wet. Never point a powerwasher hose at anyone and do not attempt to rinse feet or hands in the spray.

The renovation resource The Family Handyman suggests starting with a wide-degree nozzle to test out the spray on the surface that needs to be cleaned. A 15- or 25-degree nozzle is usually the wand for general cleaning and paint stripping without damaging the surface of the home. Experiment with an optimal distance of the washer wand to get the desired cleaning effects without causing any damage. Work using a horizontal and slightly downward angle to avoid driving water up under the siding of a home.

Avoid spraying any electric wires or components on the home. Also, try not to spray upward, and angle the spray away from doors, windows and vents.

Some washers have reservoirs that will hold a detergent solution. Choose the right detergent for the job. Keep in mind that cleansers containing bleach can damage surrounding plants, so they may need to be covered while the washing takes place.

Avoid the use of ladders when operating a powerwasher. The push-back from the wand can cause falls. Instead, opt for an extension wand to address the upper reaches of a home.

Powerwashing a home is an effective way to remove stubborn grime and refresh the look of a home's exterior. FH198130



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Quiet home noise with soundproofing



Many people want their homes to be comfortable, relaxing retreats. While much thought will be given to layout and decor, the noises in and around a house also can affect how enjoyable a space is or isn't.

Certain offenders are driving up the noise levels in homes. New building materials that are lighter than those used in the past can make it easier for noise to travel between rooms. In addition, open floor plans make it easy

for noise to travel from room to room, while handheld personal devices can make rooms noisy. Homeowners who want more peace and quiet in their home can take the following steps.

Add more drywall: Homeowners may not be able to add walls of sturdy brick to block sounds, but they can add more drywall in noisy rooms. Consider adding more drywall to a library or reading nook. The home improvement resource HomeLogic notes that drywall can be used to isolate noisy rooms, such as those where kids practice playing musical instruments.

Beef up dense materials: Heavy curtains, fluffy furniture and thick carpets can make rooms quieter because they help absorb sound waves. Such items and materials also can help prevent echoes. Bare walls and floors will only make sounds bounce around.

Seal holes and cracks: Noises from outside can sneak around gaps in windows, doors and siding. Making sure gaps are sealed will not only make a home more energy efficient, but also help block out some exterior noises.

Fix squeaky floors: Wood floors can shrink and expand, leading to movement and the development of squeaky areas. By fixing squeaky floors, homeowners can reduce noise created when people walk through their homes.

Soundproofing a home can be a relatively easy and effective DIY project. FH188248

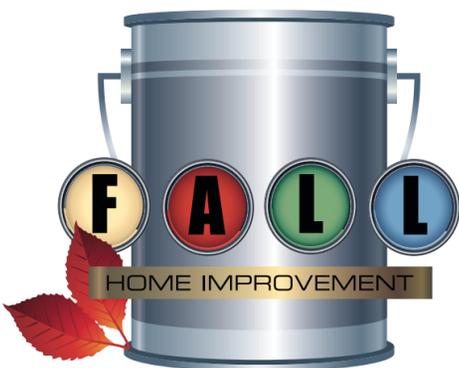
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