



Cleaning a chimney yourself is a big task especially if it is your first time ever doing it. If you are anything like I am you want to be totally prepared before you begin the task! I like to be very knowledgeable of the task at hand and also have all of the necessary tools or [supplies](#) ready to go! It is so frustrating when you have to stop in the middle of a task to search for a tool. It's even worse when you have to stop multiple times, now the task is going to take you 2-3 times as long as it would have if you were prepared! So let's make sure that you are as prepared as you can be to clean your chimney.

First have the Chimney Inspected



It is recommended that you have your chimney inspected on a regular basis, normally in between heating seasons. This is to ensure that your masonry chimney is operating to its full potential and is not a hazard waiting to happen. It is best to hire a professional for the chimney inspection. They know exactly what they are looking for and have the tools to look up into the flue thoroughly. If there is a problem or any defects they will be sure to find it and then you will also know if it will be something that you could easily fix on your own or if it would be a better idea to hire someone for the job. The inspection is particularly important if you have just purchased a home and are planning on using the fireplace or wood stove during the first heating season.

Gather the Tools and Supplies Needed



Now it is time to get all of your supplies and tools ready. There are items that you will need to have on hand for protecting the room where the chimney is located and also items you will need for the actual cleaning process. So I will list of the items you will need and a brief description of what they are used for.

❖ [Chimney Brush](#) – This is a must not matter how you will be cleaning your chimney. The chimney brush is what you will be pushing and pulling through the chimney to remove the creosote buildup. The chimney brush that you choose

should match the exact inner dimensions of your flue. There can be up to a ¼" difference. In some cases you may have to purchase a chimney brush that is as close as possible and trim the bristles down to the exact measurement.

- ❖ **Rods** – If you are using the brush and rod method you will need some rods! Chimney rods will attach to the brush so that you can push and pull it through the chimney. You need to make sure that they both have the same connecting end type and NPT. If the ends are different types or NPT you will need an adapter to convert them. The construction material will also be a feature you will want to take note of, it will determine the flexibility of the rods.
- ❖ **Work Gloves** – Having a pair of work gloves is a good idea no matter what cleaning method you will be using. Cleaning a chimney is a dirty job so the work gloves will help to keep your hands clean as well as protect them.
- ❖ **Ladder** - You will need a ladder to get up on top of your roof for cleaning from the top down or using the pulley method.
- ❖ **Plastic Tarp or Drop Cloth** – This will be needed for the next step in Chimney Cleaning Preparation: Protecting the area. You will lay the cloth or tarp down to protect the flooring and furniture in the room that the stove or fireplace is located in.
- ❖ **Broom and Dust Pan** – Have a broom and dust pan on hand to clean up any debris that is knocked loose from the cleaning. All of the debris will fall into the firebox and will need to be removed.
- ❖ **Dust mask and Goggles** – These are not required but it is a very good idea to protect yourself from inhaling creosote dust and from getting debris in your eyes. It is especially recommended for the person who will be standing inside during the cleaning.
- ❖ **Old Clothing** – When cleaning a chimney wear old clothing that you do not care if it gets ruined. As I stated earlier cleaning your chimney is a very dirty job. It is difficult to clean it without at least getting soot on your clothing. There are coverall suits that can be purchased to protect your clothing.
- ❖ **Ash Vacuum** – An ash vacuum is a great tool to have for cleaning out the firebox and surrounding area. First use the broom and dust pan for removing large debris, then use an ash vacuum to get into the corners and cracks to fully remove ash that has been left behind.

Protect the Indoor Area



You work hard to have your home just the way you want it, so it makes sense to protect it and keep it as tidy as possible. Use a tarp or drop cloth to cover any furniture that may get covered in soot particles during the cleaning process. Also cover the flooring to protect it. If you have carpet this is an important step, soot and creosote stains can be very difficult to remove from carpet fibers. If you have a fireplace you could also use a fireplace [cover](#) to minimize the amount of dust that enters the room. It will help to keep the mess contained in the firebox. You

will connect an ash vacuum or shop vacuum to the opening so that the dust can be sucked up.

Time to Get the Cleaning Done



Once you have the inspection done, tools all gathered, and the room protected you are ready to get started cleaning the chimney. Decide what cleaning method you will be using, there are 4 common DIY Chimney Cleaning Methods that most homeowners use: Brush & Rod Top Down Cleaning, Brush & Rod Bottom Up Cleaning, Weighted Cleaning, or the Dual Line Method. We will go further into detail about these methods in future blog post. Depending on which method you choose you may need to gather a few more supplies. So, check back on Thursday

September 10th for more details about the different cleaning methods.