



Cleaning your chimney from the top down with a brush and rod is the most commonly used method by DIY chimney cleaners. This type of cleaning method requires you to be on the roof of your home. This method will also result in the least amount of cleanup inside the house. The debris can be contained either inside of the wood stove or by closing off the fireplace opening until you are finished. But before you start cleaning your chimney you need to make sure that you have the proper tools. So let's talk about choosing the right chimney brush and rods for your chimney system.

### Choosing a Chimney Brush



There are many types and sizes of chimneys so before you choose a chimney [brush](#) you will need to measure the inner dimensions of the chimney that you are going to be cleaning. If your chimney is a metal Class A chimney, prefab chimney, or a masonry chimney that has been relined you will need to remove the chimney cap then measure the distance across the inner diameter of the round chimney flue. The best chimney brush for a metal flue is a poly bristled brush this is so that the inner wall of the chimney is not grooved by the metal bristles on a wire chimney brush. If you have a masonry chimney measure the inner flue liner dimensions both directions. You will then choose a chimney brush that matches the measurements as closely as possible. For an oval flue you will measure it the same as the masonry chimney. And again choose a chimney brush that matches the measurements as closely as possible. Wire brushes are recommended for the more porous clay or masonry flues to get the creosote build-up off more efficiently. If you are unable to find a chimney brush that matches your flue openings exact size you would then purchase the brush that is larger but still is the closest in size to your flue. You will have to trim the bristles down to match the opening of your flue exactly; this is the same if you have an oval flue as well. You want the bristles of the brush to reach the side walls for an adequate clean.

### Choosing the Rods



There are 3 main types of chimney brush [rods](#) fiberglass, nylon, and polypropylene. Fiberglass rods are going to be the stiffest of the 3 types. They should be used in flues that are pretty much a straight shot. They are good for straight flues with heavy creosote buildup requiring strength for pushing through the buildup. Nylon Rods are super flexible. They are used in chimneys where there are tight bends present. These rods will bend around 90 degree bends or more.

Due to the extreme flexibility and thin rod diameter they may become too flexible in long chimney runs. They are best used when the bend is at the end of chimney and can be used in combination with other style rods. Polypropylene or ProFlex Poly Rods are designed to be flexible enough to go through sharp bends, offsets, breaches, or thimbles; their flush brass fittings stop flue tile hang-up. Although large in diameter these polypropylene rods are flexible and versatile.

### **Cleaning a Chimney Using the Top Down Brush and Rod Method**

Now that we have gone over the differences in chimney brushes and rods it is time to get started with the chimney cleaning. For the Top Down Brush and Rod Method you will need to be on top of the roof! Make sure that you are wearing old work clothing or a coverall suit to protect the clothing underneath. Cleaning a chimney is a very dirty job and soot does not come out of clothing easily at all. Also make sure you are protecting your eyes and lungs by wearing protective eyewear and a dust mask. Here is a list of additional tools and supplies that you will need for this job:



- Chimney Brush
- Rods (enough for the entire chimney height)
- Work gloves
- Ladder
- Drop cloths
- Broom and Dust Pan
- Ash Bucket or Container
- Ash Vacuum

### **Cleaning Step by Step**



1. You will want to start by laying the drop cloths over the furniture and flooring in the room where the chimney is located to protect it from being damaged by any soot that may get into the room during cleaning. If you have a fireplace, another great option for this step is to use an ash vacuum and a fireplace cover. This helps to contain the debris in the firebox.
2. Use the ladder to climb on top of your roof, taking all of your supplies with you.
3. Put all of your protective wear on before you begin the next step in the cleaning process.
4. Attach the first piece of pipe to the brush. Insert the brush into the chimney. By pushing and pulling the brush and rod, begin to scrub the flue clean.
5. Add another section of chimney rod to extend the brush further down the chimney. Continue in this fashion until you've cleaned the entire length of the flue.
6. Once you have scrubbed the entire length of the chimney disassemble the rods as you pull them out of the chimney. Place all of your supplies back in the bag or carrier and climb back down from the roof.

7. Use the small wire brush or broom to clean the bottom of the flue and the firebox, brushing all of the debris to the floor of the firebox. Then use the broom and dust pan to clean up the large debris. Place it in an ash bucket or container to be disposed of.
8. To get rid of any ash or small debris that is left behind by the broom and dust pan use the Ash Vacuum or shop vac.
9. The last step is to clean up all of your supplies and remove the protective drop cloths.

Now that your chimney is completely clean you can feel safe to start the first fire of the heating season when the time is right for it. If you still have questions or would like to learn more about chimney cleaning click [here](#).