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Clean it up!

Use a low pressure hose to rinse weather stains, muck, webs, or other dirt off the exterior of your home. Be sure to move outdoor furniture, vehicles or other décor out of the way before you get started. This is especially important if you’re paying someone else to do the job — pay them to paint, not redecorate.

Fix it up!

You may need to finish some other stuff on the “honey-do” list before you get to painting, such as fixing small holes in the siding and repair cracks where moisture tends to collect. Be mindful of whether the issue is crucial to the pre-painting process, or if it is merely a cosmetic issue you can address later.

Scrape it up!

Tools required: 1) Paint scraper. 2) Sander. 3) Tenacity.

If your house was built before 1978, the paint may contain lead. Get the lead out! Go to www.epa.gov/lead for information on how to safely remove lead paint.

Prime it up!

Treat yourself: splurge on some high-quality wood primer – it will ultimately make your job easier.

Talk it up!

If you plan to outsource your paint job, make sure you negotiate the details with your contractor. Once you’ve reached an agreement about liabilities, delegations and pricing, put the conversation in writing for easy reference.

Keep it simple!

Think two-tone, not Picasso (and definitely not Pollock!) Stick with colors and designs that won’t seem garish in a couple years.

Painlessly painting your home’s exterior