



Guttering Maintenance Guide

Sat above the eye line of home owners, builders and surveyors, guttering is one thing which is often overlooked on a property. By regularly checking and cleaning your gutters you can increase their life expectancy by at least 5 – 10 years. From Cast Iron and Aluminium to plastic your property's guttering needs to be properly maintained to ensure there are no unexpected costs due to leaks or breaks. This guide will give you key information on how to maintain, clean and if it comes to it repair your guttering.

Maintaining Your Guttering

To give your guttering the best opportunity to exceed its natural life expectancy you should make sure that you take time to properly inspect them. Upon inspection if there are no obvious sign of structural damage to the guttering then a thorough clean is all that will be required. No matter what material your guttering is made from cleaning will increase its working life, in some cases a gutter made from GRP if cleaned regularly, can last longer than a cast iron guttering system which is left untreated. A quarterly cleaning of your gutters will keep them in tip top condition however as we all lead busy lives, twice yearly, once at the end of Spring and again at the end of Autumn. How to Clean your Guttering Once you have taken the plunge and decided to clean your gutters and downpipes you need to get yourself a few items to make the job easier, quicker and safer.

How to Clean your Guttering

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Gutter cleaning equipment

Most of the equipment you require can be bought in your local supermarket or hardware store, but you will need to get yourself a safety ladder if you can't find a friendly face to hold the ladder for you. What you will need is:



Hose pipe with adjustable nozzle



Ladder (self-footing)



Rubber or suede gloves



Goggles



Gutter scoop and or hard bristled brush

Safety Advice

Ladders

- Ensure you're confident using a ladder, practice climbing the ladder without any equipment before you begin to clean your guttering.
- Put the ladder in a sturdy safe position on the building.
- Get someone to stand at the foot of the ladder to keep it in place, or get a self-footing ladder to ensure it doesn't slip out when you begin to climb it.

Clothing

- It is essential to wear goggles to protect your eyes from any detritus which may come out of your gutter or downpipe when cleaning.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands from bacteria ridden dirt.
- Wear long sleeves to protect your lower arms.
- Wear rubber soled shoes if you're going to be adventurous and climb onto the roof. The rubber soles will help you grip to what will already be a slippery roof.

The Cleaning Process



Wash off your roof

Use a brush and water to scrub the roof and get as much dirt and bits off as possible, as this will fall into your gutter and make more work for you if you clean the guttering and downpipes first.



Utilise your hose pipe & nozzle

Use the varying pressures of your hosepipe to clean your roof off, flush out your downpipes and get rid of any stubborn guttering debris.



Scoop away bacteria

By using a guttering scoop you can be sure to get into the hardest parts of your gutter whilst protecting your hands from hundreds of different bacteria.



Don't forget down pipes

Once you've cleaned your roof and guttering then ensure you un-block your downpipes. Use your hosepipe and run water down the pipe to see if it blocks up. If the water backs up, tap down the side of the pipe or use a long stick to clear the inside and re run the water down it to ensure it is all clear.



Limiting future cleaning

There are a few ways to save you time on cleaning your rainwater system in future.

- Employ a professional gutter cleaner who will come and clean your guttering on a regular basis.
- Install a gutter guard

Guttering Guards

By installing a gutter guard system you can reduce the amount of time you need to spend cleaning your gutters quite dramatically. A gutter guard is specifically designed to prevent the accumulation of debris, prolonging the life of your rainwater system. Most gutter guards are either a wire mesh or similar insert which prevents the collection of leaves and grime in your gutters which would usually create blockages. You may think a blocked gutter isn't a major issue but this can allow animals to nest in the gutters or cause water to overflow which can cause damage to brickwork and in some extreme cases damage to the properties foundations. So the initial outlay for a guttering guard can not only save you time but money as well.

Repair or Replace Your Guttering?

When you inspect your guttering you may notice damage to the guttering in forms of cracks or loose fittings, in some cases these can be repaired by you. Things you are likely to be able to fix include:

- Loose gutter fittings to fascias
- Wonky guttering
- Loose downpipes
- Blocked gutters

These issues should be fairly straight forward for most self-taught DIY enthusiasts. For any extreme damage such as cracks or missing pieces you may need to consider replacing your guttering after getting a professional opinion.

In short gutters aren't very difficult to maintain and by proactively maintaining your guttering system you can have peace of mind that you will be relatively problem free for years to come.

If you are ever unsure about whether or not you should be repairing or replacing your guttering then get in touch with the expert team at Yeoman Rainguard who will be happy to provide their professional opinion.