



Strengthen Your Gutters

Getting Gutters Hurricane-Ready

A working gutter system with properly placed downspouts and drains will direct rainfall away from your home's foundation to prevent flooding, erosion, and water buildup. However, your gutters will only perform if they are well-maintained and free of leaves and debris. An annual gutter inspection to look for holes, rust spots, or broken supports along with routine cleaning will ensure that your gutters are ready when heavy rains come.

Step One – Assemble Your Tools and Hardware:

What you will need for this project:

- Eye protection
- Waterproof gloves
- Garden hose
- Specialty hose nozzle
- Rags or paper towels
- Gutter scoop
- Bucket with metal hook
- Ladder

Considerations:

- Safety is the number one consideration when working on your gutters. Do not attempt to clean or repair your gutters from on top of your roof, and do not attempt it at all if you have a two-story home. Only try this DIY project if you live in a one-story house, and always work with a partner to hold your ladder.
- Clean your gutters while standing firmly on a sturdy stepladder that you can use safely. Always use a tall enough ladder that gets you high enough to reach your gutters without having to stand on the top two steps.
- Inspect your gutters as you clean. Look for corrosion, holes, leaking joints or loose, missing or bent hangers. Mark problem areas with masking tape so you can find the problem spots quickly when you are ready to do the repairs.
- Remember, dry, loose leaves and small twigs can be removed with a handheld blower. Some blower manufacturers offer attachments especially for the purpose, however, removing them manually works too.
- Gutters should be inspected and cleaned twice a year in the spring and fall. However, if you can only do a once a year cleaning, plan it for after leaves finish dropping in the fall.

Directions:

- Wear eye protection and sturdy, waterproof gloves to protect yourself from debris and scratches. Place a gutter scoop, garden trowel, small hand broom, and supply of rags in a bucket with a metal hook that can attach to your ladder with a wire hook.
- Start cleaning a stretch of gutter at the downspout area. This is where debris usually collects, blocking the water's path to the downspout. Work your way along the length of the gutter, putting the collected debris into a bucket.
- After you are done cleaning, flush your gutters with a garden hose. The water flow will help you determine how well the gutters are draining and indicate any areas that are holding water. Standing water in gutters, downspouts, or near drains impede proper drainage, so consider placing sand, pebbles, or rocks in compact soil areas that won't drain. Call a professional for an estimate if you cannot fix the problem.
- Consider installing protective gutter guards or screens to decrease the amount of debris that collects in your gutters, downspouts, and drains.

