

Tips:

## Helpful Hints

***-Licensed, bonded & insured - PROTECT YOURSELF!*** - Please be sure that ANYONE who works on your property is; licensed & insured, & bonded if they work inside your home. **Aall Bright** is licensed, bonded & fully insured, we always carry proof. Just ask to see.

***-Keeping your windows clean*** - Between professional cleanings, be sure to keep up on spot cleaning, fingerprints, dog&cat nose prints etc. Stop spending your money on spray window cleaning solution from the store. Just mix a small bucket of warm water & dish soap, (we use Dawn). Dip a clean sponge, or hand/dish towel, in the soap & water, wring it out, and use a circular motion to wipe away grime. Then use a clean, dry, lint free towel, (like a dish towel that's been washed 100 times and no fabric softener), using a circular motion, buff away the soap & streaks. For the outside, you can use a soft brush, like a car wash brush, with soapy bucket and a regular garden hose, rinse your windows, frames & screens. Scrub away the dirt and rinse again. Never do this in direct sunlight, wait for evening. The hot Florida sun can cause the water to leave mineral deposits, leading to [hard water](#).

- [Hard water](#) - Hard water is caused by water, usually from sprinklers, hitting the glass, then being baked in over time by the hot Florida sun. The minerals in the water are harsh, that's why so many of us have water softeners. Sprinkler systems typically do not run through the water softener system. Hard water will appear at first as white or pasty spots. As the hard water deposits build up, the window will become very pasty looking. You can actually feel the difference on the surface of the glass. Your windows should feel smooth. If they don't, it's time for a cleaning. If your windows are showing signs of hard water, you should act quickly to save them. First, make sure sprinklers are not hitting the windows, especially with reclaimed or well water. There are certain acids that will help restore glass, also a 50/50 mix of lemon juice & vinegar may do the job, with a lot of elbow grease. We do not recommend the use of acids, they are caustic, can damage or discolor frames, cause breathing problems, etc. Harsh stuff, be careful. We also do not recommend products like CLR (calcium, lime, rust remover), or lime away. They work great on coffee pots & showerheads, not necessarily for your windows.

***-Landscaping*** - Always keep vegetation away from your house. When bushes & trees are touching your house, you create a "freeway" for pests to enter. Typically, when pest control service sprays, they spray the bottom perimeter of your home. If your bushes are touching your house above where they spray, the bugs come right in. You should leave enough room for an average size person to fit comfortably between your bushes & your house. Also, tree limbs hanging against your house, or right over your roof, can prove to be a hazard during storms.

***-Pest control*** - As previously stated, pest control typically sprays around the bottom

perimeter of your house. Be sure to have your pest control service spray thoroughly around your doors & windows and around the soffits/eaves & fascia (or trim). Not only does this help prevent access for pests, but also reduce the amount of cobwebs, cocoons and mud daubers, thus keeping your home looking its best. For best results, have us pressure wash the house prior to pest control. If you're looking for a

dependable pest control service, I recommend **International Pest**

**Management**, in Tampa, phone: **813-300-6060**. I've known the owner for years & have never heard anything negative about him. Obviously, we don't want to over treat, we have kids & pets to consider, but many pest control services have organic products, which may be safer. Personally, I choose to do it myself, I go to the "[Do It Yourself Pest Control](#)" store on Armenia & Busch, in Tampa. First, we pressure wash the house. Then, I spray all around my eaves, entryway ceiling, every window and door, outlet, light switch, water spigot, any place bugs can get in to the walls. Of course you'll want to take measures to avoid getting poison on your skin or in your eyes. Be sure to read and follow all product safety information. I've also seen that painting the ceiling of your entry/patio in the color of "sky blue", will reduce insect activity as well, they think it's the open sky, so they don't nest there. I think that's an old Key West trick. Bugs are always looking for a safe shelter, if you eliminate that, you eliminate the bugs.

**-Sliding doors** - If your sliding doors aren't sliding like they used to, DO NOT spray WD-40 in the tracks! This will cause the dirt to clump and get in the wheels even more. The best thing to do is vacuum your tracks regularly. Keep the dirt, rocks and other debris out of the way of your wheels. If your wheels are broken, cracked or worn down, you should find a local sliding door repair service. There are a few around Tampa.

**-Glass showers** - If you just spent a ton of money remodeling your master bath & chose to put in a glass wall or door; KEEP IT CLEAN from the get go. A cheap squeegee from the store is a good start, but you're only smearing the soap scum. You have to use a good detergent, like Dawn dish soap, to help break up the dirt & soap scum, then use your squeegee to wipe away the water & soap residue. Do this regularly to help maintain the appearance of your shower glass. Also, you may want to invest in a water softener system, it helps, but is not 100%. There's no substitute for regular cleaning. If you've already got built up soap scum and/or hard water, see the "hard water" section of this page.

**- Pressure washing** - Of course it is a good idea to keep up on pressure washing, this is Florida, hot, humid, a great place for mold/mildew to grow and make your home look neglected. Keep the HOA off your back, we can pressure wash the driveway and sidewalks. That would take all day with a personal home pressure washer, it's not the same as calling us. Be careful not to start too close when doing the house, you'll take off paint. If you pressure wash correctly and your house was painted properly, you shouldn't lose paint from pressure washing. Flaking paint will fall off with pressure

washing. Mold actually eats through paint, so then we pressure wash, the mold is gone, and you can see the stucco left behind. That's NOT from pressure washing, that's the mildew eating through the paint. That's why it's best to pressure wash every year, keep that algae under control. If you're applying some type of chemical or bleach, be sure to rinse thoroughly, especially your windows. Harsh chemicals can damage your glass! A regular annual pressure washing will preserve, even double the life of your paint. NEVER pressure wash from a ladder!

- **Ladders** - SAFETY FIRST! Many home owners have ladders to do work around the house. BE CAREFUL! Even a small step stool, or 6' step ladder can lead to serious injury, even death. Be sure your ladder is level and the legs are locked into position. Never use the step that says "do not use this step". It's always a good idea to have someone steady your ladder for you. If you're using a tall extension [ladder](#), first thing to do is, LOOK AROUND! You're looking for power lines, tree branches, soft ground, etc. Be sure you have the correct angle. You should stand straight up, with your feet touching the feet of the ladder, then reach your arms straight out. Your hands should be touching the siderails. If your hands go past the siderails, or you can't reach them, the ladder is not at the correct angle. If you're going up on a roof, you should have at least 3 rungs above the roof line. If you don't, don't do it! You want that much ladder above the roof, so when you get down, you have something to hold on to. Again, have a buddy there to steady the ladder. Safety First!

- **Gutters** - You should clean your gutters at least once a year, depending on the number of trees you have near the house, maybe 2 or 3 times per year. Clogged gutters prevent rain water from getting down the down spouts, the rain backs up in the gutters and makes it's way into your roof. This can lead to thousands \$\$ in damage. Gutter cleaning starts at \$75, depending on the type of debris and size of the gutters. Whether you choose us, or someone else, hire a professional, it's not a great idea to walk around your roof if you're not used to that type of thing. We do this all the time. NEVER walk backwards on a roof! Also, we do not recommend that you walk on a clay or glazed tile or metal roof. These roofs are slippery! Also, any tile roof that is dirty & wet, is very slippery! Don't go up on wet roofs!