

From Drab to Fab: Cleaning Your Outdoor Furniture

As the summer stretches on, and your patio furnishings start to show signs of use, you may want to try these simple ways of restoring them to their original lustre.

- **For vinyl cushions and fabrics without specific instructions for upkeep**, try a mixture of water and mild detergent with an “oxi-cleansing” additive for stains. Avoid chlorine bleach which can corrode stitching and cause discolouration. Rinse thoroughly and dry without direct sunlight. For longevity’s sake, invest in weather-resistant slipcovers.
- **Wicker** should be vacuumed and/or brushed before washing with a gentle soap/water solution, rinsing with a garden hose (not a power washer), and then patting dry.
- **Metal furniture** will keep its appearance longer if you apply and buff a coating of car wax after wiping clean and drying.
- **Natural woods** fare well when scrubbed with a commercial oil soap and water solution (not detergent), then rinsed with



water and patted dry. They can also retain their integrity longer with a weather-resistant stain or urethane treatment.

Pro tip: Before trying any of these techniques, always test in an inconspicuous area first.

Once your furniture is looking brand-new again, you can sit back, relax, and enjoy the summer!



Pro Picnic Safety Tips

With the hot weather here and picnic season in full swing, now is a good time to review best practices to keep your food safe from harmful bacteria. So, keep these tips in mind the next time you dine al fresco:

Keep cold food cold and hot food hot – Cold foods should be kept below 4°C/39°F in a cooler with ice packs. Hot foods should be wrapped in foil with heavy towels to keep the temperature above 60°C/140°F. To help control temperature, keep your cooler out of direct sunlight, and separate food in a different cooler than drinks.

Enjoy your spread, but not for too long – Foods should not be left out on a hot day for longer than 2 hours, or 1 hour if it is hotter than 32°C/90°F.

Beware of raw eggs – Raw eggs are particularly susceptible to bacteria growth in hot weather. If making ice cream or a dessert that calls for raw eggs, pasteurized eggs are a safer option.

Wrap it up – Wrapping your food in secure storage containers helps avoid cross-contamination, as well as deterring curious critters from getting into your food.

Happy picnicking!

Breathing Easier: Indoor Air Quality

Between COVID-19 and the alarming occurrence of forest fires, among the things we have learned is to not take the air we breathe for granted. While we can't control what may be in the air outside, many condo owners have been paying more attention to their indoor air quality. As a result, there have been many questions about residential air filters, and how effective they might be. Among the most reliable types are those that are defined as meeting the standard for “high-efficiency particulate air”, also known as HEPA. However, filtering is only half the challenge. Your HVAC system needs to send a certain volume of air through a HEPA filter to meet a clean air delivery rate (CADR). Look for a CADR of at least two-thirds of the room’s area (e.g., 120 square feet would need a CADR of at least 80).

The bigger your unit, the greater the fan capacity required to circulate indoor air through your filters adequately. Furthermore, many condo owners choose additional and more focused air cleaning by installing “air purifiers” in specific rooms. Although they don't really “purify”, they do clean the air to a particular standard, if they are designed to serve the room size with an effective CADR.



The bottom line: You need to establish what your needs are to know which unit(s) will effectively do the job of filtering out allergens like dust and dander, as well as bacteria and other contaminants.