



Choosing and Using a Pressure Washer

These handy tools are a great way to handle heavy-duty cleaning jobs around the house. Here is what you need to know to choose the right pressure washer (also called a power cleaner or power washer), use it safely and maintain it.

[Pressure washers](#) are wonderfully tools that quickly handle tasks that would take hours of backache-inducing work if done by hand. It's amazing what you can clean with a well-directed, pressurized stream of water. Here is what you need to know before you head to the store.....

Temperature relates to hot-water or cold-water pressure washers. Virtually all pressure washers made for home use are cold-water, says Andrew Pierce, director of marketing for [EveryPressureWasher.com](#), an online store that sells anything and everything to do with pressure washers. The benefit of a hot-water pressure washer, Sucato says, is that the hotter the temperature, the less cleaner that's needed. For professionals (and homeowners, too), that saves money on cleaning supplies.

Less-expensive [pressure washer](#) models will come with one, adjustable tip, Pierce says. Higher-end ones will have a set of all four tips.

Detergents

Power washers work great in conjunction with [cleaners](#); many have a built-in cups to dispense them, Pierce says. If you're going to run a cleaner through the pressure washer, he recommends sticking with products specifically manufactured for that use. Household dish soaps and cleansers can damage the pump. And never run bleach through the pressure washer, Sucato says, as it will eat up the seals.

Pre-Wash Checklist

Make sure the water supply is hooked up before you turn on a pressure washer. "You'll fry out your pump if you don't," Pierce says. Check the tips to make sure they're not clogged, and secure the connections. Test the pressure on the lawn— "the grass can grow back," Pierce says—to get a feel for the force. It's better to test there than put a dent in your car or obliterate the top layer of wood on your decking. Pull back a bit on the sprayer wand if the force is too strong; move in closer for additional force. For recommendations on nozzle distance for cleaning patio furniture to concrete, check out [EveryPressureWasher.com's project guide](#).



Major mess: It would take hours to clean this garage floor by hand. Photo courtesy of Thompson's Water Seal.



Transformation: Here's the end result after the floor was cleaned with a pressure washer and coated with Thompson's Water Seal Garage Floor Epoxy Coating.