



Photos by Scott Gabriel Morris / TNS
Above: Black architectural elements dominate this modern living space.
Below: Black kitchen cabinetry creates an unexpected, midcentury modern vibe in this urban kitchen.

GO BOLD WITH BLACK



By Cathy Hobbs
Tribune News Service

When is it appropriate to use black in home decor? Once considered harsh, black is now more popular than ever and is often the go-to color for those looking for an elegant, upscale vibe. Black offers the opportunity to infuse a bold and luxurious look into nearly any space. When using black, there are some top tips to keep in mind.

Cathy Hobbs, based in New York City, is an Emmy Award-winning television host and a nationally known interior design and home staging expert with offices in New York City, Boston and Washington, D.C. Contact her at info@cathyhobbs.com or visit her website at cathyhobbs.com.

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DOs

- 1 Do use black in social areas such as living rooms, family rooms and even dining spaces.
- 2 Do pair black with other neutral colors such as cream, blue and even brown.
- 3 Do incorporate black as an element to help ground spaces that may be overly bright.
- 4 Do use black as a cabinetry choice. Black cabinets are a popular designer choice for both kitchens and bathrooms.
- 5 Do use black on large areas such as upholstery, artwork and area rugs.

DON'Ts

- 1 Don't be afraid to use black in unexpected areas such as children's bedrooms or small spaces such as bathrooms.
- 2 Don't be afraid to be daring. Look for ways to use black in bold, unexpected ways.
- 3 Don't worry about pairing black with other dark colors such as indigo blue or deep chocolate brown.
- 4 Don't avoid using black as an accent color. Black makes a great accent when looking to create a sense of contrast.
- 5 Don't overlook the opportunity to use black on architectural elements such as baseboards, moldings and banisters.

Do I need a window cleaning pro?

By Paul F. P. Pogue
Ask Angi

With spring rolling in, you're probably thinking about cleaning your windows. After all, newly gleaming glass makes a great impression from the road, but a grime-covered window blocks your view of the lovely outdoors and spoils the look of your home. Cleaning windows can be a slippery business, though, so you'll want to be as well-informed as you can when you start.

The basics of window cleaning aren't complicated, and if you have a one-story home, you can do this work yourself without much trouble. You can clean the average window with a squeegee, a bucket of soap and water, and a little elbow grease.

However, window cleaning above the first

floor can be risky if you have a multistory house. You're standing on a ladder, working with a bucket of soapy water, and it's often tempting to stretch to reach just a little farther. According to the Centers for Disease Control, ladder falls cause 500,000 injuries per year, so it's important to take precautions.

This is why many homeowners choose to hire a pro to handle second-story window cleaning. You'll pay between \$150 and \$300 for the average window cleaning job, and it's worth it for the pro's expertise and safety knowledge. If your windows have any unusual quirks, they can clean them properly without damaging them. For example, leaded and stained glass bring their own sets of challenges. Since window cleaners are experienced pros who work with windows a lot, they can spot

potential problems that might need repair. And window problems are easier to deal with the earlier you catch them.

When you're making your initial contact with cleaning pros, you'll want a lot of information on hand to get an accurate estimate. Here's what they'll need to know:

- ▶ Number of windows
- ▶ Windows sizes
- ▶ Window types
- ▶ Any problems that make a window harder to access

It's always a wise idea to check license, bonding, and insurance when you hire a pro. But it's even more crucial when hiring a window cleaner. That higher ladder accident risk means you want to make certain the pro's insurance protects you if something gets damaged, or worse — someone gets injured.

If you decide to clean your second-story windows yourself, make



Dreamstime / TNS
Window cleaning above ground level is a job best left to the pros.

sure you follow all the proper safety procedures for using a ladder. Use a ladder that's rated for the height you're cleaning, have a buddy steady the ladder on the ground for you, and don't take unnecessary risks by stretching too far.

By the way, here's one more hint: If you don't want to deal with exterior window cleaning, you can also install replacement windows that tilt inward and make it super-easy to clean from the inside! You can easily clean windows on any floor

level like this. Many double-hung windows, which cost between \$150 and \$650 each, feature this helpful addition.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

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