14 July 7, 2019 The Sunday Times The Sunday Times July 7, 2019 15

Home Experts



A slimline direct hot water cylinder would solve your problem – try Heatrae **PROBLEM OF** Sadia (heatraesadia.com) or Gledhill (gledhill.net). You THE WEEK need an "unvented" cylinder that stores hot water at OUR BUYERS KEEF pressure, so you get a good flow rate at your shower. Ask **PULLING OUT** vour plumber to test the incoming mains pressure: ideally, you want at least 3 bar. Our house has been on The recovery (reheating) time for a direct cylinder will the market be slow compared to one for six months. heated by a gas or oil boiler, We have seen two sales fall through

so make sure you opt for storage capacity that meets after accepting offers. the demand of your shower In both cases, the estate If you cannot find space agent insisted on taking the for a compact cylinder, a house off the market after more powerful electric combi the offer was received. boiler is an option, but you but neither prospective may need to upgrade to a purchaser carried out a three-phase electricity supply survey, then they pulled out Should the cost of doing so several weeks down the be too high, then a small line. As a result, our home combination boiler has been off the market powered by bottled gas. for three of the six months stored safely outside the waiting for a sale to building, would also proceed. When we accept solve your problem. the next offer, we want to make it conditional on Choose a high-outpu model capable of the house staying on the delivering a flow rate of at market until the buver has least 15 litres a minute for committed to a survey. a good shower experience. Our estate agent is not keen on this approach.

Michael Holmes, spokesperson for the Homebuilding & Renovating Show London, October 4-6: homebuildingshow.co.uk

Is there is any quick and easy method of clearing ivv suckers from brickwork, having removed the main body of the plant? Edwina Darnell, Derby

Removing ivy roots from an old wall is always a time-consuming mission. but not impossible if you have the right tools. A hefty wire brush is ideal for rubbing roots near the ground and a "patio scraper" – a long-handled version of the same – is good for higher up. Away from flammable roofs

and sheds, where there is no risk of fire spreading, use a nandheld propane torch – like the ones chefs fire up to caramelise crème brûlée to burn dried remnants. For larger walls, a flame weed gun (about £20) will reduce reaching and bending. Test small area first, and have a nose handy. If the wall is very old, budget to have the pointing and coping along the top (the area most vulnerable to roots) repaired to stop the vy gaining a toehold again.

Toby Buckland, garden writer and host of obvgardenfest.co.uk

My son and his wife have just moved into a lovely house. But when they eat outside, the next-door neighbour's extractor fan blows straight into their faces. It's loud and the smell s strong. What can they do?

What a way to spoil a summer evening. When somebody does something on their property that has an unreasonable impact on another occupier's enjoyment of their own home, a court might be persuaded to order the wrongdoer to take action to stop the nuisance. But this is expensive and would require evidence, possibly from an expert, to show that the fan is unreasonably noisy and smelly.

they are a prolific local

investor or developer), or if

the agent has fully vetted

them and thinks that they

are motivated and able to

proceed, then taking

the property off the

market poses little

risk to the seller

and assures the

get gazumped.

purchaser has not

been fully qualified by

the agent, and flakes out.

is wasted and damage is

and marketability of the

then the vendor loses. Time

done to the perceived value

property, as it looks stale if it

is on for too long — buyers

wonder what's wrong with it

For a good agent, alarm

bells would have rung if the

buver had not booked their

survey after two weeks. I

prefer to keep a property

survey is completed. This

commitment. If you want to

respect that. They should

target-driven estate agents

are too keen to book a sale

without properly vetting the

buyer or putting the client's

Gavin Brazg, CEO, The

Advisory; theadvisory.co.uk

interests first.

I would switch firms. Many

be answering to you, not

representing the buyer.

follow this course of action,

motivates the buyer and

then the agent should

shows their financial

How can we improve the

Whether or not a

market after an offer has

been received is a subject

that's hotly debated. If the

prospective buyer is well

known to the agent (perhaps

property should be

withdrawn from the

result in a sale?

Name withheld

chances that an offer will

on the market until the

and why the sale fell apart.

buyer they won't

If, however, the

Instead, you could visit the council's planning webpage to see if the neighbours applied for permission to install the fan (though this is not always necessary for small external equipment). If they did. download the decision notice and plans to check that the fan has been installed in the right location and see whether there are any conditions regulating noise, extraction or hours of operation. If these conditions are being breached, or if they failed to get the required planning consent, you could ask the council's enforcement team to take action.

Another practical solution would be to talk to the neighbours about relocating the vent or adding noise insulation. This option is more likely to preserve relations, but your son may end up paying for the works.

Carina Wentzel, associate, Russell-Cooke; russell-cooke.co.ul

DO YOU NEED HELP FROM NE OF OUR EXPERTS?

Fmail your questions to homehelp@sunday-times co.uk. Advice is given

THE BEST... WASHER-DRYERS

Siemens WD14U520GB £765; johnlewis.com

This washer-dryer is great for stain removal, especially with cottons, and has a large 10kg capacity drum. It's simple and intuitive to use, and dries clothes quickly. Its energy consumption

RUNNER-UP Bosch WDU28560GB £790: appliand

80/100 This easy-to-use machine is a good choice if you're sensitive to laundry detergent, because the rinse cycles are particularly good — as are the spin cycles. The speedy drying programs leave clothes almost perfectly dry.



goodhousekeeping.com/uk/ , washer-dryers

HOW DO I CLEAN MY BATH IF

Wendy Maddocks, London

Spray Scrub Free on the bath to remove any scum, rinse, then spray with Clean Shower. Thereafter, use Scrub Free every few baths and Clean Shower after every bath. Both products are by Arm & Hammer **Astrid Havdon**

Run a bath with biological washing powder and leave overnight. Margaret Johnson, Northamptonshire

Get a shower head on a flexible hose fitted - so worth it to clean the bath! Next, spray Flash liquid around the bath, rub with a "sponge on a stick" such as the OXO Good Grips Extendable Tub and Tile Scrub (£13), then hose off with the shower head. Sarah E Birkin, North Yorkshire

Try using a long-handled back-scrubbing brush, the type with cactus fibre or similar bristles. Sit on a stool while you scrub the tide marks away. Lesley Evans

I use a clean floor mop. Krystyna Thompsor

Future question What is the best way to remove labels and residue when reusing iam jars for homemade preserves?

Send your tips, tricks and questions to

HOW TO...

and picking up the Pledge;

secondary consideration,

our auide.

but it's key to this drive to be

Looking at ways to reduce the amount of scrubbing you do isn't just for those averse patterns or variation are to putting on rubber gloves

it helps the environment, too There are natural cleaning ranges out there, but most mainstream products still on sills, work surfaces and open shelving. Storing items include harmful chemicals "Designers are seeking to in cupboards or in drawers conserve resources such as reduces dusting and wiping water and minimise the use effort considerably. Plenty o of chemicals," says Julia storage is vital, "However Begbie, director of KLC much you think you need, the School of Design. "Ease of actual volume is probably cleaning is perhaps a

more eco-friendly. So, if the idea of less wiping and mopping appeals, as well as reducing your use of chemical products, there are ways to make you home cleaner by design without compromising on style or functionality. By making sensible choices at the build or refurbishment stage, and adding in some everyday tricks to prevent grubbiness, you can free up time to do somethina more exciting than dusting. Here's

wood floors tend to show up every mark or speck of dust Matt surfaces or those with usually more forgiving and save on polishing time

Minimise the amount of stuff double," Begbie says.

Grout is prone to discolouration and general arubbiness so it's a challenge to keep it looking good. Mosaic tiles are particularly tricky - go for larger sizes to minimise joins. Begbie suggests waterproof shower panels. which have minimal seams Ranges such as Bushboard's

Glossy, highly varnished finishes, including travertine and marble. If you want tiles. the cleaning expert Aggie MacKenzie (aggiestips.com) suggests that you "go with grey grout over white, especially for floors, or you'll be endlessly disappointed".

Regularly squeegee shower screens to prevent a build-up

Nuance come in convincing

with as few awkward crevices as possible. A wall-hung loo or concealed cistern means less exposed surface area and no hard-to-reach waste pipe. It looks neater, too. particularly in smaller spaces. Invest in a "quick release" seat; they can be clipped off for a thorough hosing down or soaking and make cleaning around the fixings less awkward.

of grime, or invest in coated

reduces scum and limescale

shower enclosures (if space

folding versions, as there are

Similarly, choose a toilet

allows) or hinged doors are

self-cleaning glass that

marks. Larger doorless

oreferable to sliding or

fewer places for gunge to

build up.

When selecting

appliances and units. check for nooks and crannies where crumbs and grease can lodge. Again, go for glass splashbacks or larger tiles to

the amount of grout that can be discoloured by cooking

splatters. And flat-fronted cabinets without decorative mouldings are quicker to wipe down.

Induction hobs are much easier to clean than their fiddly gas counterparts, and self-cleaning ovens are a revelation, with a dedicated high-temperature setting to burn off grime. Some coffee machines offer auto-clean

functions, too. Modern "solid surface" worktops such as Corian are favoured in professional kitchens and healthcare settings with good reason they're more stain-resistant and smoother, with fewer ioins to scrub.

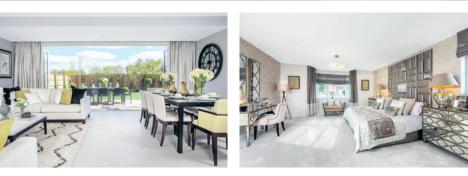
When designing new cupboards anywhere in your home, consider having them built right to the ceiling so there's no space for dust to gather on top. If your existing cupboards have a gap. MacKenzie suggests lining the top with paper simply pull that down and replace it every couple of months, remembering to recycle where relevant. In fact, she recommends lining any horizontal surfaces. shelves, drawers and ovens to save effort reaching up or Lakeland sells liners for just about everything in a kitchen (lakeland.co.uk).

A salt-based water-softening system is a worthwhile ovestment to tackle limescale in hard water areas, although the main kitchen drinking-water tap will need to be excluded and you'll have to top up the salt periodically.

Cordless designs such as Vax's Blade 2 (from £199) or Dyson's Animal range (from £299), lessen both the time and effort of vacuuming. The best are as powerful as corded models, but more manoeuvrable – no struggling on stairs or nolding the cord out of the way. Robot hoovers are another option, although tend not to be as thorough.

Ask family and visitors to remove shoes when entering the house, and confine all meals and snacks to the kitchen/dining table to reduce crumbs and spillages

Liat Hughes Joshi



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