

*Incredible Ways to  
Increase the Value of  
Your Home with  
Exterior Upgrades*



# ABSTRACT

A home's value is highly dependent on its square footage, number of rooms, and other interior features, but what's outside counts, too. Having a well-maintained yard, an attractive exterior, and functional outdoor living spaces can all add up to a big boost in value. And it's often the small details that make the biggest difference to a potential home buyer.

# INTRODUCTION

If you're looking to increase your home's sellability, tackling a few simple projects can help your home make a good impression without having to do a complete exterior overhaul. And if you're not ready to sell quite yet, investing in outdoor upgrades you can enjoy now often produces a high return on investment later.

## I. 7 Outdoor Updates That Add Major Value to Your Home

We spoke with experts from Better Homes and Garden Real Estate to determine the best outdoor updates to boost home value. Start with these projects to revamp your exterior and build equity at the same time.

### 1. Make your yard more functional.

Adding function to your backyard is one of the best things you can do to boost home value, says Jessica Poulos, owner of the Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Northwest Home Team in Tumwater, Washington. "Can you entertain? Can your kids play? Can you exercise? Can you tinker on hobbies or in a garden?" Use landscaping, hardscaping, outdoor furniture, and other add-ons to create zones that can accommodate various outdoor activities.



## 2. Clean up the exterior.

As the first thing potential buyers see when they pull up to your home, the exterior needs to appear clean and well-maintained. "If a buyer drives up to a home and the yard is neglected, they will begin to think it's too hard to take care of," Poulos says.

"First impressions are everything." Prep your home to show with simple spruce-ups like pressure-washing the driveway, cleaning the roof, mowing the lawn, and adding edging around flower beds. These easy projects can often make a big difference in your home's perceived value.

## 3. Attach an outdoor living space.

When it comes to outdoor living, easy access is key. According to a recent survey from Rocket Homes, an attached outdoor living space, such as a deck or porch, can add almost \$20,000 to the value of a home. Consider your area's climate and weather patterns to determine which type of outdoor space might bring the biggest boost.

For example, in the Pacific Northwest where rain is common, "a covered porch with an outdoor kitchen, dining area, or sitting area has a high return on a home's value," Poulos says. In sunnier climates, an attached deck with a pergola can offer valuable open-air living space that provides some relief from the harsh sun.

## 4. Simplify your landscaping.

Most buyers want low-maintenance plantings. Hosta and daylilies are hearty perennial options for simple landscaping. Putting down mulch or groundcover also makes for easy upkeep. If you want to go with something temporary, put colorful annuals in pots. Add mulch, pull weeds, and trim hedges around the yard for a clean and effortless look.

## 5. Fix damaged siding.

Residing can be a long and often pricey process. Show buyers that your siding is in good shape by repairing any cracks, missing pieces, and surface chips. For a fresh look without painting, consider a professional pressure wash. If the exterior is brick, fix thinning areas of mortar.



## 6. Dress up your front door.

A new coat of paint in a color other than white or black can make the front door memorable for potential buyers. Go with a color that stands out, but also complements the style of the home. Replace the handle if it's tarnished or looks dated. Spray paint the handle if it just needs a quick update. Accessories like door numbers and knockers give a welcoming feeling, so play up the hardware.

## 7. Repair windows.

Even a little damage to one window gives the impression that there could be more problems. A few quick fixes will reassure buyers that the windows are nothing to worry about. Fix caulking around frames and glazing on panes for a like-new look. Replace cracked or foggy windows to make the best impression. If there are built-in window boxes, repair them and give them a fresh coat of paint. Then fill with pretty annuals.

## **II. Garden gates: 11 garden gate ideas and tips for a stylish exterior**

A great garden starts with great garden gate ideas. Take a look at these beautiful entrances – including Monty Don's gorgeous garden gate



Looking for some gorgeous garden gate ideas? Whether it forms the entrance to your home, is located at the back or side of your plot, or leads from one zone to another, a garden gate can be a fabulous garden feature in its own right. In other words, think of it as merely functional, and you're missing a trick.

Want some inspiration? We've put together some brilliant garden gate ideas you can use in your own space whether it's large or small, and whether you live in urban surroundings or in the country (or want the country look in any case). We were inspired by Monty Don's lovely gate – you can see it below, too.

## 1. Paint A Tall Garden Security Gate To Make Pretty Feature Of It

You might need a garden gate that's actually a door for reasons of security, but that's no reason for it to look forbidding. So copy this garden gate idea: choose a bold shade that draws the eye and you'll transform it from barrier to beauty. Which colour to choose? You can't go wrong with a tone of blue or green in the garden as it will be in harmony with its surroundings, or how about a sunny yellow?

Can you fit a padlock or smart lock (check our buyer's guide for the best)? If so, consider how post might be delivered, and how you will be able to identify and admit visitors from inside the house. Adding lighting around a locked gate will help you with identifying visitors and provide extra security, too.

As well as keeping intruders out, consider whether your gate needs to keep pets and children safe, which might mean that you simply position any latch too high for little ones to reach.

## 2. Choose A Wrought Iron Gate For Country Cottage Appeal

The advantages of a wrought iron gate? They have classic style you won't tire of, yes, but the other big plus point is that as well as creating an elegant entrance, it doesn't form a solid barrier. Instead, you'll get tantalising glimpses through to the garden beyond. The result is that choosing one of these can create excitement about exploring even the most modestly sized of gardens. That's a garden gate idea we're on board with.



## 3. On A Budget? Pick A Wooden Garden Gate

Creating a country cottage garden? An intricate metal or simple timber garden gate will suit and won't be too expensive. Contemporary home? Think flush finish, streamlined and crisply painted. Urban period terrace? Look for something that reflects what might originally have been at the top of your garden path.

## 4. Pick A Mediterranean Shade To Add A Splash Of Colour

If you've planted your garden with bright, pretty blooms, pick a garden gate idea that can stand up to them. An easy way to do this is with paint: pick a bold, Mediterranean shade (pink, yellow, orange) to match your blooms and brighten up your garden in an instant.

## 5. Want A Smart Look? A Metal Garden Gate Complements Red Brick Beautifully

If you're looking at garden fence ideas as well as garden gate ideas, ensure the two complement each other. It will give your garden a smart appeal. If matching materials don't work, consider whether what you choose to have your gate made from can still complement your boundary's material. Cast iron gates look fabulous matched with period-style brick walls, for example, and wooden gates work well with wicker fencing panels.

## 6. Want A Rustic Look? Cope Monty Don's Garden Gate Idea

Think about how your gate complements the style of the garden – or the part of the plot – to which it leads. The gate that goes to the Orchard in Monty Don's garden is rustic in style and complements the well-established trees and long grass beyond. Just picture a brand-new looking gate here; it just wouldn't look as good.



Designed to develop a silver-grey patina after a year or so, this gate design has rustic charm.

## 7. Match The Gate To The Front Door Colour

A garden gate painted in the same colour as the front door creates a smart entrance. What's more, it's a look that works as well for old cottages like this one, as it does for townhouses. If the gate and path lead straight to the front door, it can be an especially impactful choice, but even with a gate to one side, it'll help give your home kerb appeal.

## 8. Frame The View Of Your Garden Gate With A Hedge

With a gate below and an arch above you can make going through the entrance to your garden feel like a step into another world. You could grow a hedge above as here, but for a far more speedy solution, simply choose a gate and arch combination. You can then grow climbers around it that will soften the lines and bring fragrance and colour.

## 9. Remember Your Garden Gate May Require Planning Permission

Particularly if you live in a Conservation Area, it's always worth checking first that the gate you're planning to buy will be accepted by your local planning authority.

## 10. Don't Forget The Posts For Your Garden Gate

Ensure that the gate posts or structure that will support the gates is strong enough for the purpose, and if not upgrade them. Use quality fixtures and fittings designed for the purpose.

## 11. Your Gate Will Need Maintenance

At least once a year, clean and grease the hinges of your garden gates to keep the mechanism moving freely. Take care of the gate's material, too. It will need painting and staining to keep it sounding and looking as good as new.



Check out our pick of the top fence stains that you can use to maintain wooden gates. If you have chosen metal garden gates, head over to our guide to cleaning, repairing and repainting old iron railings gates.

## **III. 5 Types Of Siding To Consider For Your Next Home Remodel**





Choosing the best type of siding to install on your house is a big decision, and it's often a difficult one. There are many different options to choose from, and it's important to consider them all. When choosing your home's exterior siding, you should prioritize durability, aesthetic value, cost and required maintenance. Each type of siding has its own set of pros and cons in these areas.

## Vinyl Siding



Vinyl siding is one of the most popular choices in the United States. It's a form of plastic siding that is often seen on smaller homes or apartment buildings that need weatherproof protection (especially in areas that get lots of precipitation and storms). It can come in a variety of colors, making it an aesthetically pleasing exterior choice.

Vinyl is a relatively low-cost siding option. For a typical single-family home of about 2,000 square feet, it costs between **\$6,150 and \$15,900** to install.

Because it's made from polyvinyl chloride, or PVC, vinyl siding is essentially fire-resistant. PVC will not ignite unless it reaches an extremely high temperature, about 750 degrees Fahrenheit. PVC also needs a uniquely high amount of oxygen to continue burning. That means it's harder for fires to initially ignite and even harder to continue burning.

## Pros

- Fire-resistant up to 750 degrees
- Vast selection of styles
- Inexpensive

## Cons

- Can fade more quickly than other types (10 to 15 years, depending on the climate)
- Sensitive to excess UV light exposure and harsh weather conditions
- Prone to mold growth and rotting sheathing if not installed with a waterproof seal

## Wood Siding



Wood is one of the oldest exterior siding options available. It's very versatile as it can be stained or painted to look exactly how you want it to. Plus, it comes in multiple different arrangements, like shingles and vertical boards, to help homeowners achieve any desired look. Depending on the arrangement, the cost of wood siding can range from **\$7,000 to \$23,000**.

While wood siding tends to look impressive, it is a risk for house fires. Wood is a combustible material, meaning it can go up in flames when exposed to high heat. Wood siding can ignite, causing flames to spread up the wall and into the home. Wood siding also requires continuous maintenance and repainting as time goes on. Painting professionals recommend a fresh coat every three to four years. When wood siding is regularly maintained, it can last for 20 to 40 years before needing a full replacement.

**TIP:** *Wood is a combustible material, meaning it is quick to go up in flames if exposed to high heat. One option homeowners have to combat this is to add a flame retardant chemical to the siding, which is an added cost.*

## Pros

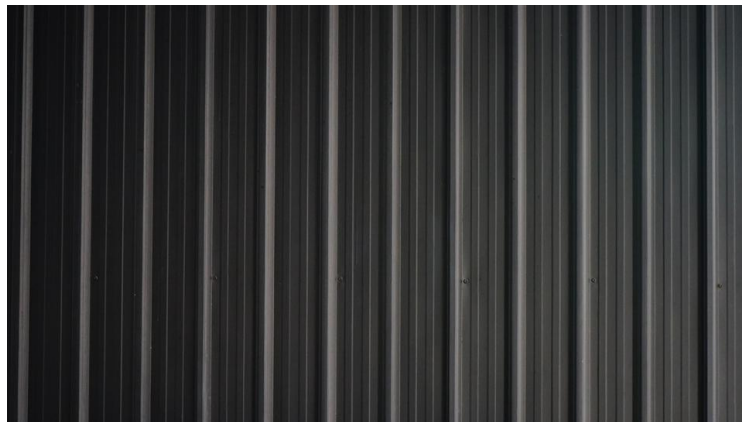
- Offers a classic look in a variety of styles

- One of the greener options (since manufacturing wood siding is natural and non-toxic, as opposed to the processes required to make vinyl siding, for example)
- Can be more versatile and customizable than other types

### Cons

- Combustible and a fire risk
- Lacks durability
- Requires refurbishment every few years

### Metal Siding



Many homeowners think of metal only as a roofing material, but metal is gaining popularity as an exterior siding material as well. It's strong, relatively easy to install and can come in a variety of types, like aluminum and steel. After metal siding is installed, it requires virtually no maintenance.

Metal siding is durable and stands up well to harsh weather conditions like snow and extreme temperatures. Unlike wood siding, metal siding does not have the tendency to warp, rot or be susceptible to pests. The downside is that metal is a poor insulator and is not soundproof. If you live in an area with an extreme climate and if you are sensitive to outside noises, metal may not be the best siding choice.

### Pros

- Extremely durable and low-maintenance
- Fairly simple to install
- Impervious to unwanted pests and fire

### Cons

- Offers little insulation

- Not soundproof; if you live in an area with an extreme climate or if you're sensitive to outside noises, this will be a problem.

## Fiber Cement Siding



Durable and solid, fiber cement siding is an excellent exterior siding option for those who are looking for something that will last at least 30 years. Fiber cement siding is especially good for homeowners who live in an intense climate, because it can stand up to harsh weather, including hail and strong winds.

Fiber cement siding is made out of a mixture of wood pulp and cement. It maintains the durability of cement but offers flexibility in aesthetics. Fiber cement siding can be made to look like a variety of other siding materials, like wood. The biggest barrier of fiber cement siding is the fact that it's expensive to install. That's because the installation process requires a significant amount of manpower, and therefore, labor time. You will likely have to pay for a professional to install fiber cement siding, so be prepared for a hit to your wallet.

### Pros

- Durable, even in harsh weather
- Offers a broad range of styles
- Low-maintenance
- Fire-resistant

### Cons

- Expensive to install
- Absorbs moisture
- Not energy-efficient

## Brick Siding



Brick is a classic and timeless exterior siding material, and it's been a standard in the building industry for years largely because of its durability. Brick siding doesn't need to be regularly repainted, unlike wood or vinyl siding that tends to fade in the sun. Brick is a very low-maintenance exterior siding option that will last at least 100 years on average.

Brick also tends to increase your home's value as compared to other exterior siding types, so it can be a good choice if you'd like to turn a home into an investment property. A report by Acme Brick shows that brick homes increase in value by about **\$4,000** over a home with wood or fiber-cement siding.

While brick siding beats other siding materials in terms of appearance, longevity and strength, it does come with a drawback: Its cost. Brick is one of the most expensive options on the market. For a 2,000 square foot home, brick siding costs between **\$8,900 and \$25,000**.

It also requires additional materials, like a waterproof membrane, to make sure it's effective. But besides these additional materials, brick is an all-natural and very eco-friendly choice. Since bricks originate from natural materials, its carbon footprint is relatively small. Plus, bricks are recyclable and biodegradable.

### Pros

- Eco-friendly
- Low-maintenance
- Weather- and fire-resistant

### Cons

- Expensive to install
- Requires a waterproof sealant

- Color limitations

## Alternative Materials

There are plenty of other materials used for siding to consider. These include:

- **Composite:** Composite is of the most durable types of siding with quite a few style options.  
Hardie board: Another durable option, hardie board can be more expensive than other options mentioned.
- **Stone veneer:** Stone veneer is a lightweight and cost-friendly option that is less environmentally friendly—it can't be recycled.
- **Manufactured wood:** This siding option t looks like the real thing but succumbs to mold and mildew if moisture finds its way in.

Not only is siding an effective tool for beautifying a home, but it's also an important safety feature and an investment into your home's value. Its durability and cost differ depending on the material used, so it's important to keep each material's pros and cons in mind when choosing siding for your home. Contact your local siding expert to determine which option is best for your budget and locale.

## **IV. Vinyl House Siding: Pros and Cons**

Vinyl siding is inexpensive, easy to obtain, popular, quick to install, and simple to maintain. All of these strong features point toward vinyl siding as the ideal cladding solution for your home. Or is it? On the flip side, vinyl siding is prone to breakage, can be difficult to paint, and has questionable impacts on your home's resale value. Before you make the choice to install vinyl house siding, learn all about its strong points and its drawbacks.



### What Is Vinyl House Siding?

Vinyl siding is a durable form of plastic commonly used on the exterior of homes. It comes in many colors and styles, even imitating the look of wood and other siding materials.

## Pros

### Vinyl Siding Does Not Need Painting

Nearly every siding material other than vinyl is coated with a color layer. Vinyl siding and shutters are unique in that its color is baked-in. Vinyl siding's color is 100 percent homogeneous: the color on top runs all the way through. This means that the color cannot be mechanically abraded, scratched off, or stripped. If you abhor the idea of exterior house painting, this is vinyl siding's strongest point. Vinyl siding never needs painting.

## Tip

Vinyl siding is often incorporated with vinyl fascia and soffits, which covers a multitude of issues such as rotting wood and peeling paint.

### Vinyl Siding Is Inexpensive

Few siding materials are less expensive than vinyl siding. On a materials-only basis, fiber-cement siding can cost two to four times more than vinyl siding. Comparably-sized shiplap fiber-cement siding will cost at least twice as much. Vinyl siding will nearly always be your cheapest home siding option.



### Vinyl Siding Is Low Maintenance

Vinyl siding's slick surface means that dust, cobwebs, and other debris slide off relatively easily when sprayed down with a garden hose. Because there is no paint to peel, you will never have to scrape, patch, prime, and paint your house's exterior surface.

## Cons

### Installation Is Simple but Not Fool-Proof

Once you have purchased vinyl siding, you can install it yourself, but most people rely on a contractor. Since vinyl siding's effectiveness depends on proper installation, a shoddy job means even worse troubles in the long-term. If your siding is nailed too tightly, it will expand, crack, bulge, or warp. Construction warranties often last only one year, and the product warranty may be voided by faulty installation. Not every contractor has invested in proper training and certification.

### Vinyl Siding Can Result in Other Maintenance Issues

Manufacturers often advertise that high-quality siding lasts about 20 to 30 years. However, depending on your climate, the siding might actually begin to show its age after only 10 to 15 years. Vinyl siding, especially dark siding, begins to fade in sunny climates. Painting is a poor option for reviving the color since the paint will likely peel and crack after a short time. Pressure washing can be disastrous if water enters your house through cracks and crevices around the siding.

Siding planks often split or break due to the expansion and contraction caused by temperature changes. If a lawnmower sends a rock flying at your house, it may pierce the siding. Large hail storms have been known to punch holes in vinyl siding, too. Vinyl siding cannot be patched; the entire plank must be replaced if it is damaged.

### Vinyl Siding May Lower Your Home's Value

On the front end, it does make financial sense to cover your old, peeling wood siding with fresh inexpensive vinyl siding. However, this addition can lower its value. If your home is historically significant, vinyl siding can devastate your home's value.





Architecturally, vinyl siding tends to flatten the exterior of a home. Special molding and trim are obscured, resulting in a two-dimensional look. Since many home buyers regard vinyl siding as inferior, it may result in lower offers for your home if you should decide to sell.

### Vinyl Siding May Permit Moisture Below the Surface

The main purpose of cladding, like roofing, is to keep water out of your house. Wood siding and other traditional cladding materials allow the wall to breathe; water vapor may move through the wall construction, but it can escape during colder weather. However, vinyl siding is typically installed over a layer of styrene insulation board, which may trap the water vapor within the cavity of the wall.

Water also enters the wall cavity through gaps at the edge of siding if it is not caulked. Vinyl siding must be able to move independently of the wall surface. While a water-resistant house wrap is typically installed under the siding, it is punctured by nails during the installation process, contributing to leaks. Note that this happens with the installation of most siding types, though, and that leakage is minimal if this does happen,<sup>1</sup> so this may be a more minor concern. Still, excessive moisture can rot the wood structure of your home, not to mention that decaying wood invites termites and mold.

### Vinyl Siding Manufacturing Is Bad for the Environment

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) maintains strict workplace exposure limits for employees in vinyl siding plants.<sup>2</sup> Studies are inconclusive as to whether applying vinyl siding to homes causes health problems for residents.

Recycling post-consumer PVC is both difficult and expensive. Recycling plastic typically means polyethylene terephthalate (PETE), the type used to make soda bottles and other household products. Most recycling centers will not accept items containing PVC. Once siding arrives at the landfill, it is usually burned. Incinerated and biodegraded plastic are large sources of pollution around the world.

## **V. Cleaning Vinyl Siding: A Guide To Cleaner Exteriors**

Vinyl siding makes your home look attractive from the outside, but it is likely to get dull after some time. The surface accumulates dust, dirt, grease, stains, etc., that you need to get rid of to maintain cleanliness.



Most people find cleaning the vinyl siding difficult and time-consuming. If you want to avoid the hassle and minimise the stress involved in cleaning vinyl siding, contact a company that offers the best end of lease cleaning Newcastle. The companies provide many additional services like thorough house cleaning, carpet cleaning, BBQ and oven cleaning, etc. The professionals use modern tools and techniques like pressure wash to make your vinyl siding look immaculate. However, if you want to perform the task, you will need some knowledge and elbow grease.

Read on to know the best way to clean vinyl siding.

## Things You Need To Clean Vinyl Siding

You should have the appropriate equipment with you to perfectly clean vinyl siding and get the well-maintained look you want. Here are some items that you will need to clean vinyl siding.

- Store-bought vinyl siding cleaner
- Vinegar
- Soft cloth
- Hose/buckets of water
- Long-handled brush with soft-bristle
- Pressure washer

## The Right Cleaning Solution For Vinyl Siding

You can easily get a store-bought vinyl siding cleaner from the market, but you should know that most of these products contain harmful chemicals. So, using the products can not only pollute the environment but also cause damage to the surface in the long run.

Therefore, you should opt for household products like white vinegar. You need to mix it with water in a bucket in 30-70 per cent proportion. The benefits of using vinegar are as follows:

- White Vinegar can kill around 80% of bacteria and mould
- Does not produce dangerous fumes
- Entire Safe for humans and the environment

## Tips To Clean Vinyl Siding With Hand

If you want to clean the surface with your hands, then you need to follow the guidelines mentioned below.

- Clean in Small Sections

It is one of the neglected areas of your house that need proper cleaning. So, when you decide to clean it, do not try to clean the entire surface in one go. First, divide the vinyl siding into 1.5 metres by 1.5 metres sections. It will be easier for you to identify what is perfectly clean and which sections require more scrubbing.



Test a hidden section of the siding with the vinegar solution to make sure it is not damaging the paint of the surface. Then start scrubbing from the bottom of the house and move towards the top to avoid any streaking. Once you are done with this vertical section, repeat the method until the side is complete.

- Follow the Correct Approach

You need to dip a cloth or a brush into the vinegar solution and scrub the surface properly until you see a difference. You might want to scrub the surface vigorously to remove the grime, but be gentle with the siding because too much pressure can crack the surface. Then rinse with water from top to bottom to avoid patchy drying and spotting. To carry out the task perfectly and safely, contact experienced end of lease cleaners Newcastle.

## Use Pressure Washer To Clean Vinyl Siding

Cleaning the vinyl siding by hand can be tiring and time-consuming, so some decide to pressure wash the surface. This method can save your time and efforts and also gives you excellent results. However, using the wrong technique can damage the siding. You can easily rent or buy one pressure washer from a nearby market in Newcastle or online.

Before using the pressure washer, you should check whether the manufacturer of the siding recommends using a pressure washer or not. Check whether you can use a cleaning solution in the washer or just water. Understanding the dos and don'ts is one of the most effective house cleaning tips you should always remember.

## How To Remove Moulds

Vinyl siding surface can be ideal for mould and mildew due to wet tree branches, leaky gutters and shaded humid places. Getting rid of mould from vinyl siding can be challenging but not impossible. You can use vinegar to eliminate mould and mildew from surfaces. After cleaning the marks, apply vinegar and wait a few minutes while the solution absorbs.



The easiest and most apparent areas should be worked on first. Rinse well to remove any remaining cleaning product residue. You can add the paste of baking soda into the solution to remove difficult stains. To cover the small nooks and corners, use a smaller toothbrush or brush.

Cleaning vinyl siding could be challenging, particularly if you are doing it for the first time. To make it easier, follow the methods mentioned above.

If you want to clean it in the best possible manner, contact professionals who offer reliable end of lease cleaning in Newcastle. They are not only capable of cleaning the exterior but can also improve the hygiene of the house. You should research properly before finalising a company.

## CONCLUSION

House exterior design is more important than ever, and ensuring that your home looks on point from the outside (as well as the inside), will ultimately bump up your kerb appeal, not to mention, your day to day pleasure when you return home, and its overall value. Whether you've a modern or traditional property, there are both simple tweaks and bigger changes that you can make – from windows and cladding to even your front door colour – to help improve the saleability of your home, so it is worth exploring your options.

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