

The Unger SpeedClean Indoor Window Cleaning Kit

an Interview with John Lee, John Lee Window Cleaning
by Allison Hester

For years, the traditional way of cleaning interior windows has been to wipe with a window mop then squeegee the water off. However, even “after years and years, no matter how good you are, it’s almost impossible to not drip water,” explained John Lee of John Lee Window Cleaning in Knoxville, Tenn. “That’s where the challenge is – not dripping water on things that should not get wet,” he explained, adding “I’ve done that so I know.”

And Lee should know. He has been cleaning windows professionally since 1982, and does interior cleaning for around 70 percent of his clients, which includes residential, commercial and mid-rise cleaning projects.

At last year’s International Window Cleaning (IWCA) convention and trade show, Unger introduced their SpeedClean Window Kit, designed for “drip-free interior cleaning.” (Unger actually sent one to Lee prior to the meeting, and he helped test the product for them.)

The kit includes:

- A 1 Quart Sprayer on a Belt
- An 8” Aluminum Pad Holder
- Three 8” Microfiber Washing Pads
- Three 8” Microfiber Polishing Pads
- 1 HiFlo Thread Adapter
- 1 OptiLoc 3-section, 6 foot Telescopic Pole

(Note that each of these items can also be purchased individually.)

Lee’s Findings

As with anything new, there was a learning curve – primarily on using the pads. As mentioned, the kit comes with two types of pads – a washing pad and a polishing pad. The washing pad is a longer micro-fiber pad than the polishing pad. “Because the wash pad has longer fibers, it has more carbon fibers



touching the surface of the glass, so you get better cleaning. The micro-fiber pulls the dirt from the surface, traps the dirt into the pad, and pulls it down into the bottom of the fibers. Then you can throw it in the washing machine to clean it.”

The polishing pad, which is designed to polish out the glass, uses a much shorter fiber and is “quite a bit slicker,” according to Lee. The original plan was for window cleaners to take a spray bottle with water in it, spray a little on the polishing pad, then rub the windows down. “The problem I found was that the polishing pad had so much friction on the glass that it was very difficult to slide,” Lee explained. “The washing pad, on the other hand, was much smoother on the glass and had a much better glide. So I actually found that the washing pad, for me, was easier to use.”

However, Lee found that too much water on the washing pad caused streaks. “There’s been a learning curve to find the exact right amount of moisture to put on the washing pad so you can clean the windows but have it dry clear,” he adds.

Lee also tested mixing water with Ecover, a brand of cleaner derived from plants. “Ecover uses plant enzymes to break down minerals and dirt on the glass. Through

experimentation, I found the perfect mixture of pure water and Ecover to be able to clean the window and also have it dry clear,” he explained. He carries the pre-mixed water/Ecover solution with him. “Unger sells a really nice spray bottle that connects to your belt so you can keep it there until you’re ready to spray it on the pad.”

One argument people have had about trying the indoor kit is that it won’t clean dirty windows as well as the mop/squeegee method. “But actually, the traditional mop is a microfiber pad just like the indoor kit pad is,” he adds. For really dirty windows, Lee says he has found that by submerging the pad in the water/Ecover solution, then ringing it out as dry possible, pretreating all the windows, then doing it a second time, he gets as good of results as he would have using a standard method.

However, in most instances, Lee says that the dry pads without any kind of spray are all that’s necessary.

Lee also mentioned that he’s found he doesn’t personally use the HiFlo Thread Adapter because the Unger kit “screws right into the Unger pole.”

Jeff Graveline with Unger explained the adapter’s purpose. “This adapter has a special thread, referred to as Euro-Thread (we call it HiFlo Thread Adapter), and is common with water fed pole accessories. We use this adapter to screw into the aluminum pad holder, and the adapter fits into the end of Unger Aluminum poles,” he said. “The reason we use the Euro thread is that the pad holder was designed to be used with waterfed poles. But John uses our regular ergo locking cone adapter to screw into the pad holder – which is an ACME thread (like the end of a common broom handle). Although the two threads are different, each will work with the pad holder.”

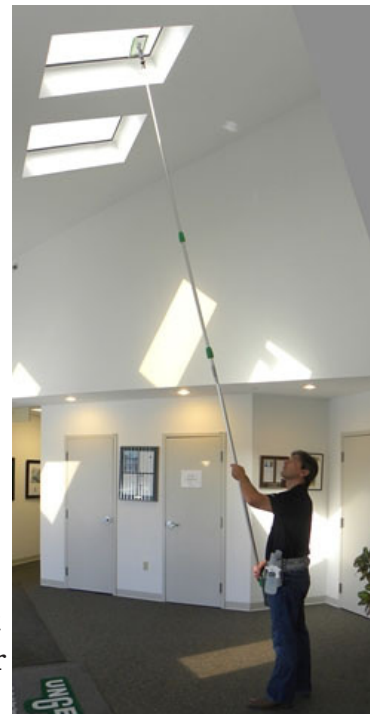
Easier on the Body

A second argument people have about using an indoor kit is that it takes longer to finish the work. Lee admits that may be minimally true, but “because of my age and arthritis, I’m finding the indoor kit is much easier on my body,” he points out. The kit has an aluminum pad holder that swivels 360 degrees so it’s easier to reach low spots, “whereas if you’re using traditional

method, you have to bend down to get the bottom half. With the kit, I can stand up and get the bottom half without having to bend.”

So in the long run, at least for Lee, the value of the indoor kit being easier on his joints far outweighs any small amounts of time that might be lost by taking a little longer to clean. “It’s basically the same argument that we face with people who still climb ladders as opposed to using the waterfed pole,” Lee added. “There’s a learning curve involved. It’s taken me this long to perfect it, but once you get through the learning curve, it’s easier and just as fast. Just like the waterfed pole is safer than ladders, the indoor kit is safer when it comes to preventing damage to your client’s belongings.”

It’s important to note that other companies have their own versions of Unger’s indoor cleaning kit, each with their own unique designs and gadgets. For Lee, it ultimately comes down to the pad. “That’s the most important element. I think Unger has done a super job at creating the right pads.”



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