

## Monthly Home Maintenance

- **Test Smoke / Carbon Monoxide Alarm** – Test the alarm by holding down the little button. If it beeps, you're good!
- **Run Water and Flush Toilets in Unused Space** – If you leave water sitting in a toilet for too long, a ring will appear. Flush toilets and run the sink / shower water for 30 seconds.
- **Deep Clean Bathrooms**
- **Inspect Fire Extinguishers**
- **Clean Garbage Disposal** – Drop a few ice cubes and a sliced lemon in the garbage disposal and turn it on. Then flush with hot water. This helps clean the blades and get rid of odors.

## Semiannual Home Maintenance (Every 6 months)

- **Deep Clean Kitchen** – Clean oven, toaster oven, microwave, stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, silverware tray, oven mitts, spices / spice rack, trash cans, garbage disposal, fixtures, surfaces, backsplash, surfaces underneath and above cabinets.
- **Change Air Filters** – Change your air filters once or twice every 6 months. Buy several in advance to stock in your garage.
- **Clean/Organize Garage**
- **Inspect Washer/Dryer Hoses** - Inspect your washing machine hoses and dryer ventilation hoses. Make sure the hoses are all attached tightly and not eroding. Clear out any lint build-up from the dryer ventilation hose.
- **Wash Windows and Blinds**
- **Clean Refrigerator** – Deep clean your refrigerator and vacuum the coils to increase performance.

## Annual Home Maintenance (Once a year)

- **Donate** – Donate old clothes, shoes, board games, toys, canned goods, and other unused items that will benefit someone else.
- **Throw Away** - Trash expired/unused medications, and expired/unused kitchen pantry items that cannot be donated to food banks.
- **Garage** – Clean out and get rid of anything you don't use in the garage. Don't just downgrade your junk to a storage unit. Storage is expensive, so consider if the items stored will be worth the monthly cost.

- **Kitchen Cabinets** – Once a year, clean your kitchen cabinets with a wood cleaning / polishing combo. (If they're not painted cabinets, otherwise just use soap and water)
- **Range Hood** – Clean the filter in the range hood. Do this by mixing some de-greaser or dish soap and hot water and let the mixture sit, then rinse away. You may have repeat this a few times.
- **Tighten Up** - Check and tighten everything that can have loose screws. Door handles, cabinets, furniture, faucets, light fixtures, light switch covers, wall attachments, etc.
- **Maintain Clean Drains** - Add a half-cup of baking soda followed by a half-cup of white vinegar to clean your drains. After 10 minutes, flush with boiling water. For slow drains, consider using Drano, or Liquid Plumber (never put boiling water or Drano in garbage disposal or toilets).
- **Inspect Grout** – Repair grout in the kitchen, bathrooms, and other tiled surfaces in your home.
- **Power Wash Exterior Windows and Siding** - All you need is your regular hose with a special attachment that creates a high pressure stream. [One of these](#)
- **Clean Oil Stains On Driveway** - Let powdered laundry detergent (mix with water until it turns to a paste) or Dawn Soap sit covered overnight. Then, with a stiff brush, scrub until it fades. You may have to repeat this a few times.
- **Touch-up Paint** – Touch up the paint both inside and outside of your home. Fill any cracks in the siding and paint.
- **Shampoo Carpets** – Rent a Rug Doctor from your local super market and clean the carpets in your home. Or you can hire a carpet cleaning service.
- **Repair / Replace Window and Door Screens**
- **Clean Baseboards**
- **Clean and Inspect Basement**

## Biennial Home Maintenance (Every 2 Years)

- Have someone come out to clean your fireplace and chimney
- Have an electrician come out to check and inspect for frayed wires
- Have a plumber come out to do a full plumbing check with your home.

## Seasonal Specific Home Maintenance Checklist

### Fall Home Care

- Fall is one of the more important times to stay on top of your home maintenance. If you prepare your home correctly in the fall, you should prevent any disasters that may come in the winter.

- **Have Heating System Checked** - Schedule an inspection in early fall before the heating season begins.
- **Check For Drafts** – Fixing drafts in your home will help keep you warm, help you save money on energy costs, and help keep your heater from overworking. Check windows and doors and seal drafts with caulking and consider purchasing a door draft guard for doors leading outside or into garages or basements. Check and replace any weather stripping that is not working.
- **Store Outdoor Furniture** – Clean and store outside furniture to keep them from being damaged by the winter rain and snow.
- **Adjust Automatic Sprinklers** – There’s no need for all that water on your lawn during the upcoming winter months. Adjust the settings to use less water.
- **Prepare Pool** – Since you will not be using the pool as much, consider throwing a cover over it and running the filter for less hours during the day. Also, there is no need to run the pool heater if you won’t be using the pool.
- **Upkeep Gutters and Downspouts** – During the fall months, you should inspect your gutters and downspouts on a weekly basis and continue to clear away leaves as they fall. Make sure your downspouts are draining properly away from the house, otherwise water can flood your basement.
- **Check Roof** – While on your roof clearing your gutters, now is a good time to inspect your roof and chimney before the winter weather season. Repair anything sooner than later.
- **Inspect Furnace** – Have someone come out and inspect your furnace before it’s too late.
- **Change Furnace Filter** - This will make your system more efficient and save energy costs.
- **Inspect Fireplace** – Check or have an inspector check for creosote. Creosote is a flammable by-product of burning wood. If it accumulates in the flue or chimney, the result can be a devastating fire. If you use a fireplace or wood stove frequently, have the flue inspected after each cord of wood burned. Also check for cracks anywhere on the inside or outside of the fireplace.
- **Check and Maintain Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors**
- **Drain/Turn Off Exterior Faucets** – Undrained water in pipes can freeze in the winter, leading to expanding, and bursting pipes. First, disconnect garden hoses and drain the water that remains in faucets. If you don’t have frost-proof faucets (homes more than ten to 15 years old typically do not), turn off the shut-off valve inside your home, and drain the faucets.

## Winter Home Care

- Hopefully by the time winter season has arrived, you’ve already completed most of your home maintenance tasks in the fall. For half the country, some of these won’t apply, so consider yourself lucky!

- **Check For Drafts** – Fixing drafts in your home will help keep you warm, help you save money on energy costs, and help keep your heater from overworking. Check windows and doors and seal drafts with caulking and consider purchasing a door draft guard for doors leading outside or into garages or basements. Check and replace any weather stripping that is not working.
- **Reverse Ceiling Fans** – Turn your ceiling fan to rotate clockwise to create an updraft that will push the rising heated air back down.
- **Check and Maintain Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Detectors**
- **Maintain Your Heating System** – Have someone come out to check your heating systems and ventilation. This will keep your system working for winter and keep energy costs low.
- **Upkeep Gutters and Downspouts** – Inspect your gutters and downspouts on a weekly basis and continue to clear away debris. Make sure your downspouts are draining properly away from the house, otherwise water can flood your basement.
- **Prevent Ice Dams** – Ice dams occur from poor insulation in your attic. [Here's what happens](#). Make sure you prevent this from happening, otherwise a major water leak can occur in the middle of the cold winter.
- **Remove Icicles** – Continue to remove icicles because the weight can damage your home and be unsafe when they fall.
- **Maintain Walkways/Stairs** – Continue to shovel snow and use pet/human/animal friendly ice melt.
- **Stock up** – Don't wait until the first winter storm to stock up on the essentials.

## Spring Home Care

- **Inspect Home Exterior** – Winter can take a toll on your house, so it's a good idea to inspect any damage it has caused. Check for damaged roof shingles, damaged chimney, damaged siding, and rotting wood trim around the windows. Repair sooner than later.
- **Check Hose Faucets For Freeze Damage** - Turn the water on and place your thumb or finger over the opening. If you can stop the flow of water, it is likely the pipe inside the home is damaged and will need to be replaced. While you're at it, check the garden hose for dry rot.
- **Clear Away Dead Plants & Leaves** – Spring is the time to clear away any leftover leaves or dead branches you missed in the fall. Clear your yard and areas around the house and get them ready for new spring growth.
- **Clean Out Gutters and Downspouts** – Clear away any debris build up from the winter season roof runoff.
- **Check and Service Air Conditioning** - Change the filter, check hose connections for leaks, and make sure the drain pans are draining freely. In addition, vacuum any dust that has settled on the unit and connections; over time it can impact the air conditioner's effectiveness. Hire an air-conditioning

specialist if needed. It's better to do this in the spring before summer hits and service repair workers get too busy and up their prices.

- **Inspect Attic** – Search for signs of colonizing insects or animals. Also, vigorously search for mold which will look like gray or black blotches. Proper insulation and good ventilation will slow mold growth. Take care of this sooner than later as mold will spread quickly in the warmer months ahead.
- **Inspect Basement** - Basements are prone to dampness and insects. Dampness suggests inadequate ventilation and the need for a dehumidifier. Inspect the base of concrete walls. If you have cracks that start from the bottom up then there's a sign of water damage. In this case, hire someone to come out and assess the problems and possible solutions. Also, check for exposed wood framing for termites. If you see the slightest bit of tunneling in the wood, call a pest control company immediately.
- **Check and Run Your Gas/Battery Powered Lawn Equipment** - Make sure your outdoor power equipment is ready for summer use. Clean equipment and sharp cutting blades will make yardwork easier.
- **Ready Your Grill** – Inspect and get your barbecue ready for the upcoming BBQ season!

## Summer Home Care

- Ok, summer is an easy one and there is not too much necessary work - unless you still haven't finished your spring home maintenance checklist!
- **Clean / Refinish Your Deck** – Summer is a great time to refinish your deck.
- **Paint Exterior** – Now that the rain is gone consider touching up the exterior of your home with some paint.
- **Mulch** – To keep your garden beds from drying up quickly, throw down a layer of mulch. This will also help prevent weeds from getting out of control.
- **Plan Watering Schedule** – Lawns and gardens should be watered heavily once every three days to provide for deep root penetration. If you water lightly every day, you waste much of that water to evaporation and your lawn/garden will likely die. Also, consider letting your lawn grow out another inch in the summer to keep the roots cool and moist.