# Use our home maintenance checklist to keep your home in top shape.



We all know home maintenance is important. There's just so much to remember! It's easy to overlook certain tasks, and then find out the hard way what we should have done last season to protect our home this season. To make it easier, we've compiled a seasonal home maintenance checklist to keep you on track all year long.

**Fall Home Maintenance Tasks**

- **Heating system maintenance.** Schedule a professional inspection and maintenance for your heating system before the coldest months arrive. Also, remember to change your furnace filter regularly; experts recommend replacing it at least every 90 days. If you have furry pets or family members with allergies, you might want to replace filters more often.
- **Fireplace and chimney cleaning.** Have your fireplace and chimney cleaned and inspected for creosote buildup or blockages. This is crucial for safety because buildup and blockages can catch fire and/or allow smoke and carbon monoxide to flow back into your home.
- **Insulation check.** To ensure your home is properly insulated, check for any gaps or leaks around windows, doors, and vents. Seal or insulate these areas to improve energy efficiency.
- **Leaf removal and gutter cleaning.** Regularly rake and remove fallen leaves to prevent them from clogging gutters. When the last leaves have fallen, inspect the gutters and clear out any remaining debris. Clogged gutters can lead to water damage and ice dams in the winter.
- **Sprinkler system maintenance.** When lawn watering season is over, sprinkler systems must be drained, or the water can freeze, expand, and cause cracks in the pipes and valves. You can do this

yourself or call in a professional.
- **Roof inspection.** Check your roof for missing or damaged shingles, as well as any possible leaks. Calling in a professional to do this is your safest bet, especially for multi-story homes. A pro can do any repairs that are needed, too.

**Winter Home Maintenance Tasks**

- **Plumbing insulation.** Insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing and potential bursts. This is especially important for pipes in outdoor areas, like the garage. Also, check for any leaks or drips and repair them promptly.
- **Snow removal.** Keep walkways and driveways clear of snow and ice. Stock up on rock salt or sand to help prevent slips and falls.
- **Detector check.** Test smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and replace the batteries if needed. If your detectors are more than 10 years old, replace them with new models. Here's how to find the best ones for you.
- **Roof raking.** During particularly heavy snowfall, you may need to use a roof rake to remove snow from your roof and prevent ice dams. An ice dam forms when melting snow from the roof freezes when it reaches the colder eaves, forming a "dam" that causes other water to build up on your roof. Here's how to use a roof rake.

**Spring Home Maintenance Tasks**

- **Gutter and downspout check (again).** Clean out debris from gutters and downspouts to ensure proper drainage during the rainy season.
- **Roof inspection (again).** Once the snow is gone and it's safe to use a ladder, you can check for any loose shingles or signs of damage that occurred during the winter (or hire a professional to do so). Addressing these issues early can prevent leaks and further damage.
- **Air conditioning check.** Schedule a professional tune-up for your HVAC system to ensure optimal performance during the hot months to come. And don't forget to keep changing that filter.
- **Exterior inspection.** Inspect the exterior of your home for any cracks, peeling paint, or damaged siding. Schedule any necessary repairs.
- **Deck check.** Inspect your deck or patio for any signs of rot, loose boards, or damaged seals. Make any needed repairs and give it a good power wash. If necessary, reseal or restain wooden deck surfaces.

**Summer Home Maintenance Tasks**

- **Pest control.** Keep an eye out for pests like ants, termites, or wasps. Take necessary measures to prevent infestations.
- **Lawn and tree care.** Regularly mow the lawn, water as needed, and trim any overgrown hedges or trees. Take special care to keep tree branches trimmed away from the roof; broken tree limbs can cause damage during summer storms.
- **Home improvement. Ready for new windows?** A new interior or exterior paint job? A total remodel? Warm weather makes most home improvement projects easier. Get large projects scheduled and started early — contractor delays are common.
- **Dryer vent maintenance.** You should vacuum excess lint out of your clothes dryer vent and duct at least once a year. A clogged vent can cause your dryer to overheat, which can cause a fire. Here's how to clean yours.

There may be other tasks you'll want to add, depending on your home and its features. For example, if

your home has a pool, that’s a whole other checklist.

Post your checklist on your fridge or by your desk as a handy reminder to keep your home in top condition all year long. And because no home maintenance checklist can prevent every disaster, add this one last item:

- **Home insurance checkup.** Regularly review your homeowners insurance policy and make sure you have enough coverage. For instance, that summer home improvement project could increase the value of your home, and you’d want to increase your coverage to ensure it’s covered in the event of a loss. You can get help from a local, independent agent to determine the right amount of coverage for your home.