

MAINTAINING YOUR HOME AFTER PURCHASE



Owning your own home can be an excellent investment. It can also be financially draining if you aren't regularly maintaining your home. Regular maintenance can take time, planning, and money, but it can help you to save on unexpected repair costs and keep the value of your home up. Below, we share some of our tips for becoming a financially responsible homeowner.

STAY ON TOP OF REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Your house needs regular maintenance, just like your car. However, unlike your car, homes don't typically have maintenance lights that come on when something needs attention. However, you don't need to feel overwhelmed trying to remember everything you need to do to keep your house in good repair. You just need to get organized with a system that works for you. You may decide to keep a checklist on your fridge or in a binder. Or, if you prefer a more high-tech solution, you can set recurring reminders in whatever calendar or task manager you already use. Whatever method you choose, below are some on-going basic maintenance tasks to add to your list:

MONTHLY

- Clean or replace air filters.
- Check the water softener, replenish salt if necessary
- Clean faucet aerators and showerheads to remove mineral deposits.
- Unclog/clean sink and shower drains.
- Test smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Inspect electrical cords for wear.
- Flush out hot water from the water heater to remove accumulated sediment.
- Clean the garbage disposal by grinding ice cubes, then flushing with hot water and baking soda.
- Dust air vents and returns.



FALL

- Hire a professional to inspect and tune up your heater.
- Check the fireplace for damage or hazards.
- Clean fireplace flues or bring in a professional to inspect.
- Seal cracks and gaps in windows and doors with caulk or weather stripping; replace if necessary.

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- Remove leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Drain and winterize exterior plumbing.
- Check water heater for leaks.

SPRING

- Inspect roofing for missing, loose, or damaged shingles and leaks, especially after winter storms.
- Clean window and door screens.
- Power-wash windows and siding.
- Remove leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Replace the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Have a professional inspect and pump the septic tank.
- Remove the insulation from outdoor faucets, check sprinkler heads, or other winterization you may have completed.
- Have your air-conditioning system professionally inspected.
- Fertilize your lawn.
- Schedule tree trimming for large trees and shrubs.
- Oil and inspect automatic garage doors or have them professionally tuned.

YEARLY

- Analyze energy costs and look for ways to save by replacing old windows and appliances with energy-efficient options.
- Inspect all outdoor vents, walls, and foundations for holes that rodents could enter.
- Have a pest inspection and schedule regular visits, as necessary.
- Look for leaks and any standing water and repair.
- Inspect your sprinklers and irrigation systems.

CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Whatever maintenance schedule you decide works for your household, you will only realize the financial benefits if you stay consistent. Decide what items on this list apply to your home and what other items might be missing (i.e. pool maintenance). By completing regular and consistent maintenance, you can turn your home into a financial gain, rather than a drain.