



Monthly Home Maintenance

Performing a few simple monthly maintenance on your home can prevent costly repairs down the road. To be cost-conscious, these tasks can be DIY-friendly and completed with common household tools.

Check HVAC system filter

Some filters are reusable, while others are disposable and must be replaced. Clean or replace filters when they get dirty, which might be anywhere from 30 days to a few months.

Look for leaks around toilets and sinks

Any sign of water where it shouldn't be is a reason to investigate further. Even a tiny leak could be costly.

Inspect grout and caulking

Touch up any voids or cracks in tubs and showers. This keeps them looking nice while helping to avoid seeping water damage.

Check kitchen vent hood filter

Clean or replace if needed. Consider looking at the vent hood filter more often if you have an avid chef in the household.

Test smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors

In addition to a monthly test, Consumer Reports suggests you change batteries every six months. Make it a habit to change the batteries when you change your clocks during Daylight Savings Time.

Stroll around outside

You're probably outside your home on a regular basis, but how often do you really look it over? Walk around the house and any outbuildings; look for issues with the foundation, vents, gutters and drainpipes.

Seasonal Home Maintenance

Some monthly home care maintenance tips are likely to change with the seasons. Here's your seasonal maintenance reminders:

Spring

HVAC checkup

Have your system tuned up before air conditioning season arrives. Always use a trained professional for this. Many companies offer discounts to those who sign maintenance agreements for spring and fall tune-ups.

Look for leaks around toilets and sinks

Any sign of water where it shouldn't be is a reason to investigate further. Even a tiny leak could be costly.

Inspect grout and caulking

Touch up any voids or cracks in tubs and showers. This keeps them looking nice while helping to avoid seeping water damage.

Check kitchen vent hood filter

Clean or replace if needed. Consider looking at the vent hood filter more often if you have an avid chef in the household.

Test smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors

In addition to a monthly test, Consumer Reports suggests you change batteries every six months. Make it a habit to change the batteries when you change your clocks during Daylight Savings Time.

Stroll around outside

You're probably outside your home on a regular basis, but how often do you really look it over? Walk around the house and any outbuildings; look for issues with the foundation, vents, gutters and drainpipes.

Summer

Trim around outdoor HVAC units

Grass and weeds growing around the units can affect their efficiency and could even cause expensive damage.

Inspect your decks

If the wood is beginning to show its age, summer can be a good time to apply a coat of stain or sealant. Take the time to tap down any protruding nails and sand any rough areas to ensure safety throughout the seasons.

Check siding

Warm weather is ideal for pressure washing vinyl or fiber cement siding. Pay close attention to each piece of siding as you clean it. Look for cracks, soft spots and any other signs of trouble.

Inspect foundation and crawlspace

Look for cracks that may need repair. Check the crawlspace right after a heavy rain to make sure there's no water getting in there.

Fall

HVAC system inspection

Have a qualified HVAC mechanic inspect your system, or if you have experience in this area do it yourself, to ensure it's ready to heat your home all winter.

- Clean your humidifier
- Check furnace & ventilation system
- Check filters for condensation & humidity
- Balance air flow at heating duct
- Clean or replace your furnace filter

Check interior

- Clean range hood & over the range
- Microwave filters
- Check and test carbon monoxide & smoke detectors
- Check caulking & weather stripping on exterior doors and windows
- Inspect floor drains
- Check and test sump pump
- Drain sediment in hot water tank
- Check basement tele posts
- Inspect and clean dishwasher filters

Clean gutters and check roof

Remove all debris that can trap snow and water during the winter. If you live in a one-story home, this can be a DIY-project for you and a partner. Ensure eavestroughs and downspouts are clear of debris.

Check exterior

- Check exterior grade. Fill in any depressions near the foundation that can trap water or snow. These water issues could eventually lead to damp basements, settling or foundation damage
- Check caulking & weather stripping on exterior doors and windows
- Fertilize your lawn
- Check for soil settlement at foundation
- Water your trees & shrubs
- Window wells
- Ensure window wells are clear of debris so water can flow to the weeping tile system. The top of a window well should be a minimum of two inches (50 mm) above finished grade
- Turn off outside hose bibs



Winter

 Watch for ice dams

An ice dam is a ridge of ice that builds up at the bottom of a roof, trapping snow and melting water behind it. This can allow water to infiltrate the roof.

 Check for drafts

Cold air slipping in around doors and windows can cause higher heating bills. Use this simple trick: light a stick of incense and slowly move it around the seams of doors and windows. When the smoke blows around instead of rising in a straight line, you've got a draft. Many gaps can be eliminated by applying a little caulk.

 Test your sump pump

If you have a basement sump pump, make sure the switch is on and pour a little water in the crock to ensure it starts. Many basement leaks occur during upcoming spring thaws, so check it now to be safe. Check the backup battery as well. Review more information on sump pumps from the North Dakota State University Extension Office.

 Close foundation vents

Crawl space ventilation is good for your home during the spring, summer, and fall. However, during the winter months, closing the vents can help lower your heating costs.

 Cover outdoor air-conditioning units

Snow and ice can damage outdoor air-conditioning units if they aren't protected. Covers are available at most home improvement stores, but even a secured canvas tarp will do.