



Winter

- Regularly check for ice dams and icicles. De-icing cables that sit at the front of the roof work well. Don't let icicles grow, as much as the kids may want you to. They're not only a danger to people standing beneath them, but they're incredibly heavy and can cause damage to your home. They also can cause water damage to your foundation when they melt.
- Test your electricity to the extent that you can. Always be extra careful when working with electricity. You can do a couple things on your own, though. Check that all outlets work; if they don't, you can re-wire them on your own. Also, test your GFCI outlets.
- Tighten any handles, knobs, racks, etc. Go through the house and inspect anything that could have a loose screw.
- Check all locks and deadbolts on your doors and windows. If anything doesn't work right, replace.
- Check caulking around showers and bathtubs; repair as needed.
- Remove showerheads and clean sediment. This prolongs its life and helps with water pressure as well.
- Deep clean and inspect the basement. Basements are notoriously overlooked, especially if they're primarily just storage areas. Dust 'em up, clean any windows, make sure there isn't mold anywhere, etc. Give your basement a good inspection at least once a year.

Spring

- Check the exterior drainage. Will rain water flow away from the house? Puddles should not stand around your home for more than 24 hours. If water stays, or moves toward your foundation, you have a few options. First, check your gutters. It could be a bad spout or a loose connection there; they may also just need cleaning. Second, you can grade the area around your home yourself with some dirt; this has worked just fine for me in the past. Third, for pavement, you can have professionals come out and raise it so it drains away from your home.
- Clean out gutters. They've likely accumulated leaves from the fall and grime/sediment from the winter snows and/or rains.
- Inspect the exterior of your home. Is any paint chipping? Is any siding damaged from winter? Are there any holes in your brick? Take a close look all around your house, and make any repairs as needed. Also be sure to check the foundation for any cracks. A good silicone/caulk can fix a lot of your problems.
- Get your air conditioning system ready for summer; consider having it serviced. This one really depends on your individual home, and even which part of the country you live in. Some places mostly just use window air units, while other places (like my home in Colorado) use a big swamp cooler up on the roof – these are fairly basic machines where a quick internet search can help you fix any issues that come up. Also refer to the user guides for specific regular maintenance. Central air is obviously a more complex system. Getting it serviced by a professional should be around \$100 or less, and it will save money and headaches down the road.
- Repair/replace damaged window screens. You don't want bugs making their way in because you missed a hole in a window screen. And no, duct tape doesn't count. It can be a quick fix, but don't leave it for long. It just looks bad.
- Clear dead plants/shrubs from the house. This could double as a gardening tip, but if you didn't trim trees or shrubs in the fall, do so now. Plants can weasel their way into cracks and holes on the exterior of your home, causing damage and shortened longevity. Nip that in the bud before it's an issue. If you have decorative vines on the exterior, pay close attention.
- Check trees for interference with electric lines. Have professionally trimmed if necessary. Inspect roofing for damage, leaks, etc. Repair as needed; you may need a professional.

Home Maintenance Guide



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Summer

- Check grout in bathrooms, kitchen, etc.; repair as needed. This will prolong the life of your tiled surfaces and just looks better.
- Inspect plumbing for leaks, clean aerators on faucets. Go around to all your faucets and toilets and check for any small leaks. If you have poor water pressure out of a faucet, the aerator is the likely culprit and it's an extremely easy fix.
- Take care of any insect problems you may have. Summer is their playground. You probably won't have to look too hard to notice any insect problems. Ants, spiders, moths, etc. are all common, and fairly easy to take care of. Keep cobwebs clear, have ant poison handy, make sure all doors are tightly closed, etc.
- Clean and repair deck/patio as needed. It generally just needs a good washing. A deck may also need re-staining. Also check for any loose boards or posts and repair as needed.
- Clean out window wells of debris. If you have a basement, you also have window wells. All kinds of things can get down in there from leaves, to trash, to animals.
- Check and clean dryer vent, other exhaust vents to exterior of home. While the dryer is running, check that the exhaust is coming out. It should smell nicely of fresh laundry. If there isn't much exhaust, check for blockages as well as you can. You may need a professional. Also vacuum the lint from the hose at the dryer. Clean garage.
- Cleaning the garage should be a summer ritual for every man. Keeping it clean and tidy will extend its life, and it often gets neglected of regular care. With all the extra dust it gets from the many projects you're working on, you should actually clean it even more. Once a year, however, give a thorough going-through.

Fall

- Flush hot water heater and remove sediment. This prolongs the life of the heater and helps with efficiency as well.
- Winterize air conditioning systems. Remove and store window units. If you have central air, cover the outside unit with a tarp or plastic sheeting and secure with bungee cords.
- Take care of any insect problems you may have. Summer is their playground. You probably won't have to look too hard to notice any insect problems. Ants, spiders, moths, etc. are all common, and fairly easy to take care of. Keep cobwebs clear, have ant poison handy, make sure all doors are tightly closed, etc.
- Get heating system ready for winter. Check for any leaks in windows or doors; these can cost an arm and a leg. Make sure heating vents are open and not blocked by furniture. Get furnace serviced/inspected at least every other year, preferably annually. As with the AC, this shouldn't be a huge expense. Don't forget about fireplaces if you have them.
- Turn off and flush outdoor water faucets. Also flush hoses and store them. Winterize sprinkler systems as well, if you have one.
- Get chimney cleaned, if you have one. Some folks say to do this in the spring, some say fall. Either way, just make sure it's done once per year.
- Check driveway/pavement for cracks. Make sure to have re-sealed before winter; water can freeze and expand in the cracks, causing more damage.
- Buy winter gear. Have sidewalk salt, good shovels, etc. ready for winter. You never know when that first snow will come!