

Home Maintenance Checklist

Owning a home involves a significant financial commitment as well as ongoing upkeep. Maintaining your house in a safe and healthy manner throughout means keeping up with monthly maintenance.

INDOORS

- Air Filters** – Replacing air filters is the most important maintenance task for heating and cooling systems and should be checked monthly.
- Bathrooms** – Thoroughly inspecting, re-caulking, and re-grouting bathtubs, showers, toilets and sinks as needed.
- Drafts** – To reduce utility bills, perform simple tasks like checking for leaks, inspecting materials, sealing cracks, installing weather stripping, and checking attic insulation levels. These inexpensive tasks can lead to significant energy savings.
- Dryer Lint Trap** – Remove the dryer, disconnect the gas valve, inspect the exhaust hose, and clean any lint buildup. Replace plastic or foil vent hoses with rigid metal ducts to reduce fire risk.
- Ductwork** – Seal exposed ductwork holes with mastic or foil tape, as leaky ducts can waste 20% of heating energy bill. Regular cleaning is unnecessary, as few homes need it.
- Faucets** – Clean faucet aerators and showerheads with a white vinegar-soaked towel to remove any mineral deposits, if needed.
- Floor Drains** – Ensure proper drainage by pouring water into indoor drains and ensuring outdoor drains are free from debris and leaves.
- Icemaker** – Remove the icemaker's storage bin, clean it, refill the fridge with fresh items, and replace the water supply line filter if necessary.
- Monthly Safety Check** – Test smoke, carbon monoxide, and water-leak detectors, reset outlets, and ensure home security devices function properly. Replace batteries, review evacuation procedures, and check fire extinguisher.
- Plumbing** – Test the main water shutoff valve in your home by closing and reopening it, ensuring everyone knows its location and usage instructions. Check toilet and sink valves for corrosion and leaks.
- Radiators** – Bleed hot water from heating systems by turning valves at radiator tops, releasing steam, and retightening them when hot water escapes, starting on lowest floor units.
- Refrigerator** -- Remove the refrigerator and vacuum out dust underneath and back coils. Check door seals for old or no longer airtight seals and replace if necessary.
- Secure Windows & Doors** – Burglars often enter homes through unlocked or poorly secured doors and windows. Evaluate security vulnerabilities, replace weak locks, replace dead lights, prune landscaping, and change lost keys.
- Seek leaks** – Ensure moisture-free homes by checking attics, basements, crawl spaces, ceilings, walls, and ceilings for discoloration, blistering, and blistering paint, using moisture meters for hidden issues.
- Sinks** – Remove clutter beneath kitchen and bathroom sinks, turn on taps and garbage disposal, and inspect for leaks from above.
- Sump Pump** – To prevent surprise floods in finished basements with frequent sump pump activation, consider adding a second pump and a moisture alarm to the sump pit.

- Thermostats** – Programmable thermostats can save energy by allowing temperatures to rise during unoccupied periods.
- Washing Machines** – Remove debris filter, brush, and remove excess lint. Replace rubber hoses with reinforced steel braided ones to prevent floods and reduce failure risk.
- Water Heater** – Maintain your water heater's temperature range between 120° and 140°, drain sediment, and flush with vinegar for efficiency. Seek professional help if complex.
- Water Softener** – Use a water softener cleaner to flush the resin bed and clean the venturi valve's internal parts with soap and water.
- Wiring** – Replace frayed electric cords, avoid running cords beneath carpeting or rugs, and use extension cords as permanent plug-in solutions.

OUTDOORS

- Chimney** – Check for soot and creosote buildup in chimneys, as they can cause fire hazards. Regular chimney sweeps are recommended, but services may recommend expensive repairs.
- Drainage** – Ensure rainwater flows away from walls and gutters and hire a drainage outfit for regrading if issues arise. Avoid basement waterproofing contractors for unnecessary systems.
- Freeze ups** – Drain outdoor faucets, garden hoses, check insulation in unconditioned areas, and shut off irrigation systems to prevent freezing.
- Garage Doors** -- Clean tracks and grease roller wheel axles as needed, following best practices outlined in your unit's owner's manual.
- Gutters** -- Stopped-up gutters can cause major problems, so someone should clean them. Cover gutters with guards, but give power lines a wide berth, as metal ladders may cause shocks.
- Ice Dams** -- Ice dams can form on roofs due to warmer central areas, causing snowmelt to back up. Solutions include regulating attic temperatures, sealing hatches, and improving ventilation.
- Lawn Care** -- Avoid mowing lawns too short, keeping them 2 1/2-3 inches tall. Leave clippings on the lawn for soil decomposition and fertilization but remove large clumps.
- Outdoor A/C Unit** -- Maintain outdoor A/C units by trimming growth, clearing debris, and replacing filters. Professionals perform cleaning, testing capacitors, and checking refrigerant levels, but annual maintenance plans aren't worth buying.
- Outdoor surfaces** -- The task involves inspecting and repairing various hardscaping structures such as sidewalks, patios, driveways, stairs, and other surfaces, as well as replacing any damaged or uneven surfaces.
- Repress roots** -- To address sewer backups caused by tree roots, flush half a cup of copper sulfate crystals down a commode, avoid pouring it down sinks or bath drains.
- Trees** -- Trim shrubs, remove dead or dying trees, prune branches, and stub-cut large branches for smooth trunks. Consult a top-rated tree care service for major pruning or removal jobs.

Source: <https://www.checkbook.org/twin-cities-area/home-maintenance-plan/>

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