

Spring Home Maintenance

Check out this Spring Home Maintenance list from Master Remodelers. We hope this list will help you protect your home and make it a Masterpiece!

interior

- Change HVAC air filters.
- Clean and inspect window screens for damage.
- A little work now will keep unwanted pests outside your home.
- Look for moisture in the basement and crawl space.
- Leaks in these spaces could turn into costly repairs. Inspect the air-conditioning system.
- Trim brush around the unit and clean the coils if necessary.
- Inspect the washing machine water hoses for cracks and the dryer vent for lint buildup.
- Inspect the air ducts for buildup of mold, allergens or debris.
- Make sure your sump pump is in working order.

exterior

- Inspect gutters and downspouts for damage and debris.
- Working gutters and downspouts as well as any downspout extensions ensure that water is diverted from your home's foundation.
- Trim trees and shrubs that are near the house. This can prevent damage to siding, windows or the roof.
- Inspect caulking around doors and windows for damage or wear. Replace if necessary to increase energy efficiency.
- Inspect wooden decks, railings, windowsills and steps for rot.
- Repair or replace damaged wood, and touch up paint, stain or wood finish.
- Pressure wash patios, decks, driveway / walkways, and outdoor furniture.
- Pressure wash your soffits and siding too, if necessary.

- Inspect outdoor sprinkler heads for damage from snow plows or cold weather.
- Inspect and tune up any lawn maintenance equipment.
- Sharpen tools, charge batteries, lubricate moving parts and replace old gas.
- Clean debris from foundation vents and window wells.
- Check your roof. Look for nail pops, torn or missing shingles. If you can't safely climb a ladder then grab a pair of binoculars.
- **Chimneys** | If you have a masonry chimney, check the joints between bricks or stones. Have any fallen out? Is there vegetation growing out of them? Each is an opportunity for water infiltration. Also, look for efflorescence - a white calcium-like deposit that indicates your masonry joints are no longer repelling water but absorbing it. Consider re-sealing masonry with a clear, impermeable or water-resistant barrier material.
- **Exterior Walls** | Whether you have wood siding, stucco or brick, look for trouble spots, especially under eaves and near gutter downspouts. Water stains usually indicate that your gutters are not adequately containing roof runoff. If you have wood siding, check for openings, damaged areas or knots that have popped out, making way for carpenter ants, woodpeckers and other destructive pests.
- **Foundations** | When inspecting the exterior of your home, be sure to examine the foundation from top to bottom for masonry cracks. Consult a foundation specialist if you see continued cracking.
- **Windows** | Leaks around windows will allow warm summer air in and let cooled indoor air escape, so be sure to check that any caulking and weather stripping you have in place has remained intact. Spring-clean your windows—inside and out—with a store-bought or homemade window cleaner (one cup rubbing alcohol, one cup water and a tablespoon of white wine vinegar will work just fine) and either a squeegee or a soft cloth. Never use abrasive cleaners or a high-pressure spray washer.
- **General Cleaning** | Spring is a good time to clean areas of the house that often go neglected. Dust or vacuum chair rails, window casings, tops of wall-mounted cabinets and ceiling fans. Launder or dry-clean fabric draperies and use a damp cloth to clean wood and vinyl blinds. Vacuum upholstered furniture and mattresses and consider renting a carpet cleaner—anything you can do to remove settled dust, mites, and allergens will make for a cleaner, and healthier, home.

If you detect grease residue in the kitchen, consider washing cabinets, backsplashes and walls with warm water and mild detergent. The same is true in the bathroom, where soap residue and fluctuations in heat and humidity combine to create the

perfect breeding ground for mold and mildew. While you're cleaning tile, look for areas of worn or missing grout, as these may lead to more serious water damage if not repaired.

- **Air Conditioning** | Just as you prepared your furnace for fall, now is the time to make sure that air conditioning units are in good working order for the warmer months ahead. Change the filter, check hose connections for leaks, and make sure the drain pans are draining freely. Check the coils on your outdoor unit. You can find a spray on cleaner at most big box stores. In addition, vacuum any dust that has settled on the unit and connections; over time it can impact the air conditioner's effectiveness. If you suspected problems with the efficiency or performance of the unit last summer, now is the time to call in a professional to check it out.
- **Attics** | Search for signs that indicate insects and critters have colonized. Also, search aggressively for mold, which often takes the form of "gray or black blotches that look like staining". Proper insulation and good ventilation will deter mold growth in the attic, so take action now to prevent the problem from developing in the warmer months ahead.
- **Basements** | The basement—prone to dampness and insects—must be part of any thorough seasonal maintenance effort. Dampness suggests higher than normal relative humidity, inadequate ventilation and the need for a dehumidifier. Check the base of poured-concrete walls. "Cracks start from the bottom up, not the top down."
- **Leaks** | Spring is a good time to check for leaky faucets, clogged drains and sweaty pipes. Check under the kitchen and bathroom sink to make sure connections on pipes and hoses are properly sealed, and look for any wetness around the dishwasher that could signal an existing or potential problem. The same is true of your laundry room; check washer machine hoses for cracks, bulges or dampness. The same is true for hot water heaters, which may show sign of corrosion and leaks.

outdoors

- **Lawns** | Rake the lawn to remove any branches, debris and leaves that you might have missed in the fall; if left, they can suffocate the grass beneath. During the winter, soil compaction, along with chemical changes altering your soil's PH, may have left your lawn vulnerable to weed growth and other issues. Even if you can't see weeds, they are more than likely waiting for optimum conditions to propagate. If you want to prevent them from germinating, consider an organic herbicide; fertilizers are better suited to the fall. Look where your lawn or landscape beds meet your home. Is the ground sloping toward your house? If so you'll need to remedy that by adding topsoil and grass seed or additional mulch to make the ground slope away from the foundation of your home.

- **Outdoor water systems** | pipes, faucets, and in-ground sprinkler systems—are in working order. Once the ground thaws completely, start preparing new garden beds for summer plants. And take stock of your garden tools and lawn-maintenance equipment, including lawn mowers, trimmers and hoses.
- **Decks and Patios** | Look for warped, loose or splintered boards, and do a good sweep to remove any leaves and debris accumulated in the space between boards. If the finish on your wood deck is faded or worn, now is the time to clean, stain, and reseal it. If you have composite decking, follow manufacturers' recommendations on seasonal care. The same is true for wood and composite fences, pergolas, trellises and other structures. If you have a stone patio, a simple hose down provide be all the maintenance required (unless you detect moss or staining, in which case a more serious cleaning may be necessary).
- **Outdoor Furniture** | If you stored your lawn furniture for the winter, bring it outdoors and give it a hose rinse, or wash it with a mild detergent. For metal furniture, check for signs of rust or paint erosion; a simple remedy of spray enamel will prevent further damage from sun, rain and humidity in the months ahead.
- **Grills** | If your gas grill has remained idle over the winter months, check burner jets for clogs and obstructions, and be sure that gas hoses and connections are sound and secure. You'll also want to check for propane. For charcoal grill owners, make certain your grill is clean of ash and free of grease residue. It's a good habit to adopt throughout the grilling season, not just in the spring.