

Getting Ready for Fall

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/30-smart-tips-to-get-your-home-ready-for-fall.html>

Cooler temperatures and soon falling leaves serve as a reminder that the fall season is fast approaching. As the seasons change, so do our activities and home needs. Even though summer is not quite over yet, it's a good time to do some seasonal maintenance to keep your home running smoothly. The weather can change quickly, especially if you live in a colder climate, and you don't want to be caught unprepared. A bit of attention now will save costly repairs and aggravation later.

Interior Maintenance

1. **Check for drafts.** Feel for drafts around the edges of windows and doors. A good tip is to use a lighted candle and if the flame flickers, there's most likely a draft. If necessary, replace seals and repair caulking around window and door frames. Consider buying heavier or insulated drapery for especially drafty windows.
2. **Have your furnace inspected.** Hire an HVAC professional to test for leaks, check heating efficiency, and change the filter. They can also do a carbon monoxide check to ensure air safety. It's also a good idea to stock up on extra air filters and change them every few months.
3. **Winterize air conditioning.** If your home has central air conditioning, (and you live in a climate where you won't need it any longer,) it may be necessary to cover your outdoor unit for winter. If you use window air conditioning units, remove them, or cover to prevent air leaks.
4. **Programmable thermostat.** Buy a programmable thermostat if you don't have one. If you already have one, check the temperature settings. Setting your thermostat to lower the temperature automatically at night and when you're not home, can result in substantial cost savings.
5. **Test home safety devices.** Replace the batteries in all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide devices and test to make sure they're working properly.
6. **Clean humidifiers.** Replace old filters and clean inside compartment. Vinegar is inexpensive and works well.

Exterior Maintenance

1. **Do a roof check.** You should be able to do at least a visual inspection of the roof from the ground. Grab some binoculars to get a closer look or if you're able and can do so safely, climb on up for a better view. Look for missing, damaged, or loose shingles. If your roof is flat, you may need to remove leaves and debris.
2. **Check the chimney and fireplace.** If you have a wood fireplace and use it often, have your chimney cleaned and inspected by a professional.
3. **Stock up on firewood.** Order enough firewood for the season. If you gather your own firewood, make sure it's dry and ready. It's best to cover firewood and store away from the house for safety reasons.
4. **Inspect siding.** Check home exterior for cracks or holes. Repair them yourself or hire a professional.
5. **Clean the gutters.** Hire a service to clear your gutters or [do it yourself](#). Remove leaves, nests, and debris from gutters and check for leaks.
6. **Check water drainage.** Rainwater downspouts need to be clear of obstructions and direct water away from foundations, walkways, and driveways. Add extensions to downspouts if necessary.

7. **Reinforce windows and doors.** Remove screens and install storm windows and doors if you use them. Check caulk and seals around all doors and windows.
8. **Turn off faucets and store hoses.** Drain garden hoses and disconnect from the outside spigots. Shut off exterior faucets, and if you have an older home, you may need to turn off the valve inside your home. Store hoses in a dry place so any residual water won't freeze.
9. **Service sprinklers and irrigation system.** Depending on your climate, your irrigation system may need to be drained and checked. Have a professional perform any necessary repairs and mark sprinkler heads near snow removal areas.
10. **Inspect trees.** Check for damaged limbs that may break or that are too close to power lines or the roof.
11. **Trim landscaping.** Cut back bushes, shrubs, and flowers as recommended for your climate zone.
12. **Bring in flowerpots.** If you keep plants or flower in pots year-round, bring them inside. If you replace plants every year, empty, clean, dry pots and put away for next spring.
13. **Plant bulbs.** If you plant bulbs for spring, now's the time to get them in the ground.
14. **Leaf removal.** Rake and remove leaves from the yard. Put into a compost pile if you have one. Alternatively, put into yard garbage bags and leave at the curb for community pick up. Check with your local city or town for requirements and pick up schedules.
15. **Fertilize lawn.** Applying fall lawn fertilizer will help prevent winter damage and spring weeds. Ask a local garden center or check online to find out which type of fertilizer you need and when to apply it. If you have a lawn service, they should do this for you.
16. **Put away seasonal furniture.** Clean and store seasonal outdoor furniture. Remove and clean cushions. Wash and dry furniture and store in a dry place over winter.
17. **Close the pool.** If you have a pool and live in an area where temperatures dip, schedule a service to come and close it for the season or if you know how, buy the supplies and do it yourself.
18. **Organize the shed.** As your shed is filling up with summer items in storage it's a good time to organize and clean out the shed. Move summer items to the back and winter stuff up front for better access. Also, remove any liquids that will freeze.

In the Garage

1. **Service summer power equipment.** Empty fuel and clean lawnmower and trimmer. Have lawnmower blades sharpened and oil changed. Have any necessary repairs done now, so that you're ready come spring.
2. **Store summer vehicles.** If you have a [motorcycle](#), summer car, ATV or other type seasonal vehicle, now's a good time to have that serviced as well.
3. **Get winter equipment ready.** Service snow blower and make sure it is ready to go, especially if you live in an unpredictable climate.
4. **Test the generator.** If you have an [emergency](#) generator for power outages, give it a test, and make sure it's in good working order.
5. **Buy extra gasoline.** Purchase extra gas to have on hand for use in your snow blower or generator, so you're prepared for emergencies. Make sure you store gasoline in tanks away from fire sources and out of children's reaches.
6. **Clean the garage.** Since you're in the garage prepping for fall, you might as well purge, [organize](#) and clean it while you're there!

As you're enjoying the last bits of summer, make sure that your home is prepared for the coming fall season. Preventative maintenance now will save money on expensive emergency repairs and wasted energy costs. Properly maintaining your home also enhances its value and appeal and is less effort than managing a crisis later. When the chilly weather approaches you and your home will be ready.