
# Spring Maintenance Tips

## Interior

**Vacuum your refrigerator coils:** A refrigerator can use up to 15 percent of your home's total power. Over time, the coils get dirty so your fridge uses more electricity. Clean coils can save you up to $100 a year on your utility bill.

**Clean range hood:** Grease builds up, and it's not like you'll be able to see it. Remover the filter and soak it in dishwashing detergent or even run it through the dishwasher. Don't forget to wipe down the inside (and outside) of the hood itself.

**Clean dryer vent and exhaust ducts:** Unplug the clothes dryer, disconnect the hose from the vent in the back of the dryer, and clean out lint from both the hose and the vent using your vacuum cleaner's crevice tool.

**Replace old caulk:** If caulk is damaged or missing, remove the old caulk and replace with the type recommended for that area.

**Check plumbing:** Look for leaks or signs of potential leaking and repair as necessary.

**Check the basement for water damage:** Water can seep in through foundation cracks and other exterior crevices. Check the basement for a musty smell, water stains and damp surfaces. If you find signs of water damage, walk around your house and check for cracks and crevices in the foundation.

**Inspect attic:** Open the hatch and use a flashlight to check for leaks and stains.

**Test garage door auto-reverse feature:** If your door has photo-electric sensors, test the auto reverse mechanism by breaking the continuity of the beam while the door is lowering. The beam is usually located within 12" of the floor. If there are no sensors, place a solid object (minimum 2" high) on the ground where the door would close. Lower the door and it should reverse when it comes in contact with the object. In all cases, if the door doesn't immediately go back up, you should have the unit repaired. It is recommended that garage door safety reverse be tested every month.

**Test smoke detectors:** Replace the battery and push the test button to see if it operates. Pushing the test button on some detectors will only confirm that the battery works. We recommend performing a smoke test to ensure proper operation. Smoke detectors are required to be located on all levels and outside sleeping areas. Smoke detectors need to be replaces every 10 years.

**Test carbon monoxide detectors:** Replace the battery if it's not a lithium type. Carbon monoxide detectors last an average of 5-7 years. They should be located in the vicinity of all fuel fired appliances and outside sleeping areas.

# Exterior

**Inspect your roof:** Your roof is your home's first line of defense against water damage. Now is the time to inspect and repair any winter damage. From the ground, examine roof shingles to see if any were lost or damaged during winter. If your home has an older roof covering, you may want to start a budget for replacement. The upcoming summer sun can really damage roof shingles. Shingles that are cracked, buckled or loose or are missing granules may need to be replaced. Flashing around plumbing vents, skylights and chimneys need to be checked and repaired by a qualified roofer.

**Clean your gutters and downspouts:** Gutters direct rain away from your roof and home, protecting both in the process. Clogged gutters, meanwhile, open your home to water damage—and there's a good chance you won't notice the damage until you need an expensive repair. Check for loose or leaky gutters and downspouts. Improper drainage can lead to water in the basement or crawl space. Make sure downspouts drain away from the foundation and are clear and free of debris.

**Check the grading**: Low areas in the yard or next to the foundation should be filled. Spring rains can cause yard flooding, which can lead to foundation flooding and damage. Also, when water pools in these low areas in summer, it creates a breeding ground for insects.

**Clean driveways and walkways:** Look for and repair any cracks that have developed. If you have an asphalt driveway and it is turning grey, we suggest that you consider having it sealed to extend its lifespan.

**Inspect concrete and brick walkways and patios**: Look for the development of trip hazards and repair. Fill in cracks in concrete slabs with a concrete crack filler or silicone caulk. When weather permits, clean and then seal the concrete.

**Look at the house foundation:** Check the visible portions both inside and outside. Masonry and concrete foundations crack. More often than not, a small crack is not a structural concern, but cracks can allow moisture to enter your basement or crawlspace. If you find a crack it should be fixed as soon as possible.

**Inspect fences and gates and decks and stairs:** Boards can loosen or be damaged from winter weather, concrete may have cracked and be in need of repair. Wood and metal finishes may need repair or refinishing to prevent ongoing damage. Gates and their hardware may need adjustment or repair to latch properly after the winter freezing and thawing cycle.

**Check around windows and doors, trims, vent covers etc:** Winter weather can crack and harden caulk and other weather seals. Inspect them and repair and replace as needed. You'll reduce your utility bill and could prevent water from entering your home and causing damage. Repair any cracked or peeling paint. A good paint job makes your home look nice, while providing a protective barrier from the elements. Touchup painting is easy to do and inexpensive.

**Check you Electrical Outlets:** Operate the weather proof cover and replace if it’s damaged. Test the outlets by pushing the test button, then reset button on your exterior GFCI outlets to ensure they function correctly. If you do not have GFCI outlets installed now would be a good time to upgrade to them to meet current building and safety standards.