

How *your* home

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Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers



fall fixes

Yes, it's true: Fall is here, and that means winter is just around the corner. The changing of the seasons is always a good time to invest in a little home maintenance so your abode is running smoothly and you catch any potentially large (and expensive) problems before they get out of hand. Follow this checklist and you'll be in good shape for the winter.

INTERIOR

- ➔ Check ceiling and surfaces around windows for evidence of moisture.
- ➔ Check caulking around showers, bathtubs, sinks and toilet bases.
- ➔ Ensure all stairs and railing do not have any loose sections.
- ➔ Test all fire and safety systems, including carbon monoxide detectors.

HEATING AND COOLING

- ➔ Clean or change furnace filters.
- ➔ Keep area around heating and cooling equipment clear.
- ➔ For boiler systems, check water level and shut-off valve for leaks.

ELECTRICAL

- ➔ Periodically check for exposed wiring and cable. Replace as necessary.
- ➔ Check all lamp cords, extension cords and receptacles for wear.
- ➔ Trip circuit breakers every six months and ground fault circuit interrupters monthly.

DOORS & WINDOWS

- ➔ Look for loose or missing glazing putty.
- ➔ Check caulking for deterioration at the openings and joints between dissimilar materials.
- ➔ Check weather stripping.
- ➔ Check for broken glass and damaged or missing screens.

PLUMBING

- ➔ Check all faucets, hose bibbs and supply valves for leaking.
- ➔ Check for evidence of leaks around and under sinks, showers, toilets and tubs.
- ➔ Inspect lawn sprinkler system for leaky valves and exposed lines.
- ➔ Check the main water shut-off valve for operation and leakage.

ROOF

- ➔ Check for any missing, loose or damaged shingles.
- ➔ Look for open seams, blisters and bald areas on flat roofs.
- ➔ Clean gutters, strainers and downspouts.
- ➔ Check flashing around all surface projections, sidewalls and protrusions.
- ➔ Trim back all tree limbs and vegetation away from the roof.

FOUNDATION AND EXTERIOR

- ➔ Check foundation walls and floors for cracking, heaving, spalling, deterioration or efflorescence.
- ➔ Inspect chimney for loose, deteriorated or missing mortar or bricks.
- ➔ Verify basement and crawlspace has no moisture or leaks.
- ➔ Inspect all decks, patios, porches, stairs and railings for deterioration.
- ➔ Cut back and trim all vegetation from structures.

Checklist provided by Pillar To Post Home Inspectors.



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your
home

Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

TREND report

↘ With rising home prices that boost home equity, many homeowners are opting to remodel rather than move. But any savvy homeowner knows that renovation without an eye on return on investment isn't a smart move. So stick with remodeling projects that will really increase the value of your home. Here's five top home-design trends.



An open floor plan.

Forty-six percent of today's buyers, regardless of generation, want an open floor plan, according to Trulia. You don't have to add space to get the open concept going though. Call a contractor to see how your existing floor plan can be opened up.



Update the bathroom.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) says this is the most popular trend, and the ROI is up to 58 percent.* Strong design trends include a walk-in shower and bigger tiles on the walls and floors.



More purposeful kitchen storage.

The NAHB says that this is the second most popular renovation project of the year. Think more and deeper drawer banks, and adding a kitchen island and pantries. The ROI is about 67 percent.



Specialize a room or area.

Entryways are transformed into mudrooms and basements are being converted into man caves and playrooms. Even a sunny niche can be turned into a useful reading nook.



Embrace hardwood flooring.

Homebuyers definitely want hardwoods and they'll pay for it. The ROI for new hardwood flooring is more than 90 percent, and it's 100 percent for refinishing existing wood floors.

* All ROI figures from the 2015 Remodeling Impact Report

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