

Home Maintenance Checklist

by Trent Hamm

As a new homeowner, I am very interested in gathering advice from other homeowners on regular maintenance tasks that can keep your home running smoothly – a bit of time on a regular basis is well worth avoiding a major disaster later on.

While I cast out requests from many of my friends and acquaintances, I was most interested in the list that my father used for maintenance around our house. Once a month, my parents would have a “maintenance day” where they enlisted all of the children and we all worked hard on home maintenance tasks. Generally, my father focused on mechanical issues around the house and things that could present a danger, while my mother took the opportunity for a thorough scrubbing of the house.

I acquired both of their lists of tasks, along with several other similar lists from other homeowners, and prepared a master list of tasks to be done on a monthly basis..

Why do this? As a homeowner, your home is a tremendous investment, and regular maintenance helps to ensure that there won't be significant damage down the road that can potentially cost you a lot of money. Consider that this regular maintenance can stop issues before they cost you thousands. Instead, take the time to regularly inspect and repair little things and your house will keep going in tip-top shape for a long time.

I don't know if I can do all this in a day! Spread them out – do a couple hour's worth each Saturday or something to that effect. Just be sure to keep a schedule of what you're doing so they get done regularly.

Home Maintenance Checklist

You should do all of these things once a month in your home. I have double spaced them so that if you choose to print out this entry, there's plenty of room to make notes. Some of these might apply to you; I also didn't include seasonal maintenance tasks like waterproofing your deck and so on.

Check the oil on the lawnmower and sharpen the blades – well-sharpened mower blades drastically reduce mowing time

Check and fill all gas cans for lawnmowers, etc.

Check for squeaky doors and oil them as needed

Check and clean range hood filters

Check and replace furnace filters

Check and replace other ventilation system filters

Check and replace humidifier filters

Remove grills on forced air system ducts and vacuum inside the ducts

Examine the foundation for any cracks

Examine exposed wood (attic, etc.) for insect damage and do any insect preventative maintenance that needs to happen

Test all ground fault circuit interrupters

Check all vents (inside and outside) and make sure there are no obstructions

Remove screens, clean window wells, and dry them

Examine all outdoor items and see whether any seasonal maintenance needs to be done

Drain off a pan full of water from the clean-out valve at the bottom of your hot water tank (removes sediment and maintains efficiency)

Check your sump pump for any issues

Test all fire/smoke/carbon monoxide detectors in the house

Check all window and door locks to ensure they're all in working order

Check your fire escape plan and make sure that furniture additions haven't changed this

Check all faucets for dripping water and change washers if needed

Run all sinks, toilets, baths, and showers to ensure no problems (mostly just the ones not used frequently)

Check the gauge on all fire extinguishers and replace if needed

Use a pipe cleaner and baking soda to clean all drains

Check all gutters for blockage and clean as needed (bird's nests, leaves, etc.)

Check all visible pipes for leaks (don't forget under sinks, etc.)

Check and clean refrigerator and freezer coils (we did this about once every six months, if I remember right)

Check all caulking and repair as needed

Monthly Cleaning Checklist

This is the checklist used by my mother during her monthly “cleaning day,” which helped keep the house fresh. It might also be useful to you and, as before, the items are double spaced for printing and note-taking.

Clean all windows – remove the screens, clean the windowsills thoroughly, and also clean the windows thoroughly with Windex

Vacuum under *all* furniture – and vacuum all furniture, removing the cushions, etc.

Shampoo carpets as needed – this was usually done in a batch every few months

Scrub all non-carpeted floors – soap and brush on your hands and knees

Scour all sinks and tabletops

Sweep the garage floor

Put anything unused into storage (we had an annual “go through the storage” event, too)

Inventory all food staples (pantry, freezer, etc.), throw out what’s old, make a master list, and go to the store to replace what’s needed

Completely clean out refrigerator, thoroughly clean inside, then restock