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## Annual Home Maintenance Tips

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/home\\_repair](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/home_repair)

Periodic maintenance also falls under the general class of home repairs. These are inspections, adjustments, cleaning, or replacements that should be done regularly to ensure proper functioning of all the systems in a house, and to avoid costly emergencies. Examples include annual testing and adjustment of [alarm](#) systems, central heating or cooling systems (electrodes, [thermocouples](#), and fuel filters), replacement of [water treatment](#) components or air-handling filters, purging of heating radiators and water tanks, defrosting a freezer, vacuum refrigerator coils, refilling dry floor-drain [traps](#) with water, cleaning out [rain gutters](#), down spouts and drains, touching up worn house [paint](#) and weather seals, and cleaning accumulated [creosote](#) out of [chimney](#) flues, which may be best left to a [chimney sweep](#). (Wikipedia)

Depending on the age of your house, expect to spend between one and three percent of its value every year on maintenance and repair. Your maintenance budget should increase as your house ages, and remember to include money to replace major systems as required.

### Foundation

Check a couple of times a year for expanding cracks, dampness and movement. Minor cracks are normal, but if you notice they are widening, it may indicate a problem. If you catch it early, a minor crack in a poured concrete foundation could cost about \$400 to \$800 to repair. But if the damage goes unchecked, replacing the foundation wall may run you upwards of \$10,000.

## Gutters and Downspouts

In late fall or early winter, clean your gutters and downspouts of leaves and other debris. Make sure water flows freely through them and away from the house. Otherwise, a leak could cause water to build up along the foundation, possibly weakening it, inviting mold and pests or even causing a flooded basement. Keeping water flowing in the right direction will also help prevent stains on your siding and ice from forming on your porch or deck.

## Paint

Most homes with exterior paint need to be repainted every five to seven years. Signs your paint is failing include fading, blistering, cracking, scaling or peeling. Minor touch-ups every year will keep your paint job looking good and performing well against the elements. Pay particular attention to areas with the most weather exposure.

## Caulking

Expect to recaulk seals and joints around windows, doors, siding and flashing every two or three years to prevent drafts and heat loss. Your caulking may need more frequent attention if you live in an area with extreme heat or salty air.

## Windows and doors

Check to make sure all doors and windows close properly and tightly to prevent drafts and heat loss or entry. Apply weather stripping to gaps. Examine the frames of windows and the bottom of exterior doors for signs of damage. If they're badly weathered, it may be necessary to replace them.

## Chimney

As wood burns, it produces a black, flammable substance known as creosote that coats the inside flue of your chimney. Having your chimney professionally cleaned on an annual basis dislodges this build-up and reduces the potential for a fire. Also, check your chimney for any signs of cracked mortar and examine your flashing for looseness or corrosion. Repairing problem spots will prevent leaks that could cause serious damage to the structure in the future.

## Roof

Before you become aware of a leak from drips falling on your head, check for the potential leak signs yourself. Look for water stains on attic rafters and evidence of moisture in the basement. Also, check for leaks around vents, skylights and chimneys. Examine shingles regularly for lifting or looseness and reattach before they allow water into your home. In general, the thicker the shingle the longer it will last, but asphalt-shingle roofs generally last around twelve to twenty-five years and wood shakes between 25 and 75 years. Slate roofs have a lifespan of between 50 and 100 years.

## Heating

Most furnaces should be checked and cleaned only by a professional before the heating or the air conditioning season starts. Warm-air furnaces and heat pumps last for eight to twelve years, while a hot-water boiler can work well for up to fifty years. A warm-air furnace costs between \$2,000 and \$4,000 to replace, an electric heat pump costs between \$2,000 and \$4,000 and a hot-water boiler runs from \$2,500 to \$3,500.

## Air Conditioning

Your air conditioning system should also be checked every year and the air filters should be replaced monthly. Air conditioning compressors last between eight and fifteen years and can cost up to \$1,400 to replace.

A brand new central air-conditioning system starts at around \$2,000 and up.

## Safety Devices

Replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors at least twice a year. Check the expiration date on your fire extinguisher and make sure it's gauge is pointed to the green or working section, if not replace it.