

Handyman1 Spring Clean Checklists

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SPRING TO DO CHECK LIST 1 of 2 - Reprint*

Things to Check off Your List in an Hour or Less

1. Keep mosquitoes at bay. Having warmer weather and longer days means we're entering mosquito season. Take preventative measures by regularly checking your property for standing water and emptying it. Any open containers (empty flowerpots and saucers, a wheelbarrow) can become mosquito breeding grounds when filled with rainwater, so store items like these upside down or in a shed.
2. Inspect paths and driveway. Repeated freezing and thawing can take a toll on asphalt and concrete. Check your driveway and paths for cracks, scheduling repairs as needed.
3. Clean out trash cans and recycling bins. Take empty cans outside and spray them with a hose to start. Spritz inside and out with the cleaning spray of your choice. Let the bins sit for a few minutes before scrubbing them with a stiff-bristle brush. Rinse with the hose and leave them upside down to dry.
4. Check safety devices. Test batteries on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, replacing them as needed. It's also a good idea to periodically check for recalls of your home safety products
5. Clear clutter. Create more space in your home by clearing out unloved items. If you have a lot to get rid of, set a date to hold a yard sale. Or contact a local charity to schedule a pickup — some will send a truck free of charge if you're donating large items like furniture. If you have a lot of one type of item (for example, books or baby clothes), look for a consignment shop in your town where you may be able to sell them.
6. Schedule cooling-system maintenance. If you have central air conditioning, be sure to schedule professional maintenance before the start of summer. A properly maintained system cools better, uses less energy and lasts longer.
7. Spruce up the front porch. Clean the porch floor, exterior windows, windowsills and front door. Wipe cobwebs from the ceiling and high corners. Lay down a fresh doormat, and plant a pot of flowers. If you have porch furniture, clean it off and wash the cushions.
8. Test sprinklers and irrigation system. Don't let the first sign of a malfunctioning irrigation system be a drooping garden! Take the time this month to test each part, adjusting or repairing as needed. And if you don't already have drip irrigation for your garden, consider putting it in — a properly installed system can save time and

Handyman1 Spring Clean Checklists

water.

9. Wash windows. Welcome the spring sunshine by clearing dirt and grime from windows inside and out. After, wipe the window frame and sill.

10. Clean and inspect screen doors and windows. Pollen and grime can also build up on window screens, so it's a good idea to clean them once a year. For a quick cleaning, leave screens in place and vacuum with a dusting attachment. For a deeper cleaning, remove screens (mark which is which if cleaning multiple windows) and gently scrub with warm, soapy water. Rinse and let dry.

Before putting up window screens and screen doors, inspect each one for holes and rips — even small tears can let in mosquitoes. If you find any holes, repair them with a screen patch kit (available at most hardware stores).

11. Clean out the garage. Can you park your car in your garage? If not (or if it's a tight fit), it may be time to make some more space.

Clear out the junk, and schedule time to take unused paint, motor oil and other hazardous items to a recycling center that accepts them. Once your garage is cleaned out, consider adding wall-mounted storage to keep things neat and off the floor.

12. Wash siding. Using a regular garden hose, attach a siding cleaning kit to clear away winter grime from your home's siding. If your siding could use a really deep cleaning, it can be tempting to use a pressure washer to get the job done quickly.

13. Clean gutters and downspouts. Having your home's gutters and downspouts cleaned (and repaired if necessary) is one of the first important tasks to schedule this season. Clogged gutters during a rainy spring can cause water to pool, potentially damaging the roof and siding.

14. Boost the curb appeal. Spring is a wonderful time to make upgrades to your homes exterior, and even small changes — like putting up bold house numbers and a shiny new mailbox — can make a big impact.

If you're planning to put your house on the market this spring, increasing curb appeal can help lure in potential buyers, making it especially important.

5. Maintain wood decks and fences. Keep outdoor woodwork in top shape by staining or resealing it each spring. Check gates, fencing, decks, railings, pergolas and other outdoor structures, and make repairs as needed.

16. Keep an eye out for termites. "Termites swarm in the spring," says certified home inspector "If there's a bunch of winged insects flying out of a hole in the woodwork, that's probably termites." If you notice any, call a licensed professional pest-control company.

Handyman1 Spring Clean Checklists

SPRING TO DO CHECK LIST 2

1. Remove storm windows and put up screens. If you used storm windows during the winter, take them down and put up window screens. If the weather has warmed where you live, take this opportunity to clean the windows, too.
2. Get lawn and garden tools tuned up. Sharp blades make for easier trimming, so bring in your gear now so you're ready to go when the lawn needs its first haircut.
3. Check the exterior. Once winter storms have passed, check the exterior of your home for signs of damage, from roof to foundation.
4. Pull out the porch furniture. Whether or not it's porch-sitting weather yet in your neck of the woods, just seeing your porch furniture out there can be enough to lift your spirits.

Plus, getting things set up early will give you time to inspect your chairs, benches and cushions, and replace or repair worn-out pieces.

5. Make a fresh start in the kitchen. Clear the last of the Christmas cookie makings from the back of the pantry, shine up the stove backsplash, wipe out the veggie drawers in the fridge and clear the gunk from those hard-to-reach spots around appliances. A few hours of work will make your kitchen shine and set the stage for cooking healthy spring meal

6. Bring in a touch of spring. Help usher in the season with colors and accessories inspired by new growth. Try a fresh spring green or pale sky-blue wall color, blooming bulbs, houseplants, a new painting or art print, or botanically inspired decor.

7. Remove winter layers and rotate mattresses. Feeling a bit stifled under a pile of thick duvets? Swap out heavy winter bedding for lighter-weight quilts and coverlets. Also consider changing deep-pile rugs for flat-weave or natural-fiber versions for the warmer months. While you are sprucing up the bedroom, don't forget to rotate your mattress.

8. Clean carpets and soft furnishings. Have carpeting steam-cleaned and send out area rugs for professional cleaning. Launder washable curtains, furniture slipcovers, pillow covers and shower curtains. If you're done with those heavy duvets, have them cleaned before storing them.

9. Get organized for tax season. Be proactive and start sorting paperwork and computer files now, so when tax time arrives next month, you will be prepared. If, while organizing, you realize your record-keeping system leaves a little to be desired, take the time to set up a more effective system now for the year ahead.

Handyman1 Spring Clean Checklists

10. Clean light fixtures and fan blades. Have you taken a close look at your light fixtures lately? Dust and, yes (as gross as they are), dead bugs build up in and around light fixtures. Use a vacuum with an attachment or a long-handled duster to clean pendant lights, chandeliers and fan blades. If you need to get closer, use a sturdy stepladder, not a chair. And don't forget to clean the floor when you're done — some of that dust is bound to end up there.