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Preparing Your Furnace for Winter

by homewarranty.com

It's time to store those portable fans and pull out your cozy blankets! With summer coming to an end, cold weather is knocking on our doors. Make sure your family has a warm, safe place to come in from the cold by preparing your furnace for the winter.

Clean & replace air filters

Regular maintenance is the most important task for ensuring your heating unit works properly. Furnace filters should be cleaned once a month and replaced every three months. The filters capture dirt and other airborne particles during the intake of air and if they're not maintained, they can clog, taking longer to heat your home and potentially raising your energy bill.

First, make sure the furnace is turned off. Next, remove the access panel and slide out the screen. Clean it with water and use a brush and cleaner if it's harder to remove. Make sure it's completely dry before putting it back.

Get your ducts in a row

Ductwork with holes or other damages can cause the furnace to work harder than usual. Replace all damaged

and collapsed ductwork and make sure all the vents are clean with no obstructions that could prevent airflow.

Test your thermostat

Make sure your thermostat starts up properly at the temperature you have set for it. The optimum comfortable room temperature ranges from 68° to 76° F (20° to 24° C), according to Direct Energy. Your preferred room temperature will depend on the temperature outside and how insulated your home is — seal all window and door leaks to prevent that cold air from rolling in.

Give it a test run

Once you've hit all the steps above, the last thing to do is give your furnace a test run. Make sure the thermostat and heating unit function properly. Remember to always practice safety first — clear the space surrounding the heating unit to prevent a potential fire hazard. Hire a qualified professional to inspect the unit if there are any malfunctions.

Follow these tips to keep your home toasty warm this winter!

October Calendar

10/8 - Columbus Day

10/16 - National Boss's Day

10/31 - Halloween

Home Warranty Tip:



Seal air leaks

Keep your home warm this season by sealing all air leaks throughout your home. Drafty windows can let in cool breezes which can waste energy and run up the bill. Simply check the caulking on the inside and outside of your windows and replace old caulking if it's letting in air.

5 Creative Ways to Recycle Your Pumpkins

We all enjoy going to the pumpkin patch with family and friends each year, but what do we do with our pumpkins once Halloween is over? Try these 5 creative ways to recycle pumpkins.

Transform pumpkins into planters - Didn't get to carving your pumpkins this year? Empty them out and turn them into potted plants. Succulents are low maintenance and look great in pumpkins with a light green hue.

Make pumpkin soup - Nothing says "fall" like a delicious, homemade pumpkin soup. Combine various ingredients for a bistro-worthy meal on a cold day or on Thanksgiving for the whole family to enjoy!

Decorate with pumpkins - Pumpkins typically last 8-12 weeks after they're picked. Use them as a Thanksgiving centerpiece on your dining room table.

Compost your pumpkins - Compost is the most important supplement for your garden and has multiple benefits. It adds nutrients, helps retain soil moisture, reduces landfill waste, and is good for the environment.

Create a pumpkin bird feeder - Turn your leftover pumpkins into a fun project to work on with the kids. Feed the neighborhood birds with Martha Stewart's pumpkin bird seeds and watch them come and go from a window nearby.



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Spider Web Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 box chocolate cake
- 1/2 c. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 c. confectioners' sugar
- 7 1/2 oz. jar marshmallow crème
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 pinch of kosher salt
- 3/4 c. heavy cream
- 1 1/2 c. semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tube store-bought vanilla icing

Instructions:

1. Butter and flour two 9" cake pans. Prepare cake batter according to package instructions.
2. Bake according to package instructions and let cool.

3. Once cool, place first cake on a platter.

4. Make frosting: In a large bowl using a hand mixer, combine butter, confectioners' sugar, marshmallow crème, vanilla extract, and salt and beat until fluffy and combined.

5. Top with second cake.

6. Make ganache: In a small saucepan, heat heavy cream just until it bubbles. Place chocolate chips in a heatproof bowl and pour heavy cream over chips. Let stand 2 minutes, then whisk until chocolate is completely combined.

7. Pour ganache over cake. Frost a spiral of frosting on top of ganache and use a toothpick to draw cobwebs.



Photo & recipe courtesy of [delish.com](https://warranty.life/2Nl6Fjj)
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