

The Complete Seasonal Home Maintenance Checklist

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Most home repairs don't start as emergencies. A roof leak usually starts as a single lifted shingle. A burst pipe usually starts as a faucet nobody drained before the first freeze. A \$6,000 furnace replacement usually starts as a \$150 tune-up someone skipped for three years running.

This guide walks through exactly what to check each season and, just as importantly, *why* each task matters — what happens if you skip it, and what it costs you down the line.

Key Takeaways

Topic	Details
☞ Spring priority	Inspect the roof and gutters after winter, before spring rain finds every gap
* Summer priority	Service the AC before peak heat — a neglected unit works harder and fails sooner
🔧 Fall priority	Get the furnace serviced before the first cold snap, while technicians still have open slots
* Winter priority	Insulate exposed pipes — a burst pipe can release hundreds of gallons before you notice
🔧 Twice-a-year minimum	Professional HVAC servicing (AC in spring, furnace in fall)
📅 Every month, year-round	Check HVAC filters — a clogged filter can raise energy use and strain the blower motor
💰 Biggest cost-saver	Cleaning gutters twice a year keeps water away from your foundation, where damage is expensive to reverse
🛠️ When to call a pro	Roofing, chimney sweeps, gas lines, and electrical panel work

How to Use This Checklist

Don't try to complete every task on a given season's list in one afternoon — you'll burn out and skip the ones that matter most. Instead, pick two or three priority items each weekend at the start of the season and work through the rest as time allows.

Keep a simple log of what you did and when — even a note on your phone works. This matters more than it sounds: if your water heater fails at year eight and you can show it was flushed annually, that record can support a warranty claim. If you sell the house, a documented maintenance history gives buyers real confidence instead of vague reassurance.

Not every task belongs to a homeowner. Roofing above a single story, gas line work, chimney flues, and anything inside your electrical panel carry real risk of injury or costly mistakes — those go to a licensed professional, every time.

Why Seasonal Home Maintenance Matters

Water is the most damaging force your home will ever face, and each season changes how it attacks. In spring, rain finds every gap a clogged gutter leaves open. In winter, that same water freezes inside pipes and expands with enough force to split copper and PVC alike. A maintenance schedule built around the seasons targets water, heat, and cold exactly when they're doing the most damage — not on an arbitrary calendar date.

Here's what's actually at stake with each category of maintenance:

- **Gutters and drainage:** When gutters overflow, water pools against your foundation instead of draining away. Over years, this can erode soil, crack foundation walls, and create the kind of basement moisture that ruins stored belongings and invites mold.
- **HVAC systems:** A furnace or AC unit running with a dirty filter or low refrigerant works harder to hit the same temperature. That extra strain shows up two ways — a higher energy bill every month, and a shorter lifespan on a system that can cost \$5,000–\$10,000 to replace.
- **Roofing:** A single missing shingle doesn't leak on its own, but it exposes the underlayment beneath it. Once water reaches that layer, it can travel sideways under the roofline before it ever shows up as a stain on your ceiling.
- **Plumbing:** Pipes freeze from the outside in. Once ice fully blocks a pipe, pressure builds behind it with nowhere to go, and the pipe can split at its weakest point.
- **Safety systems:** Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors lose sensitivity over time, and heating season is exactly when CO risk rises.

● **Money Saver:** Cleaning gutters twice a year is inexpensive compared with repairing water damage caused by overflowing gutters.

Spring Checklist

Spring maintenance is about finding what winter broke before the next rainy stretch finds it for you.

- ☐ **Inspect the roof** for missing, cracked, or curling shingles, and check flashing around chimneys and vents — flashing gaps are one of the most common sources of hidden leaks
- ☐ **Clean gutters and downspouts**, and confirm water drains at least a few feet away from the foundation
- ☐ **Inspect the exterior** for cracks in siding, stucco, brick, or the foundation
- ☐ **Check windows and doors** for winter damage; reseal caulking
- ☐ **Service the air conditioning system** before the first heatwave
- ☐ **Test the sump pump** by pouring water into the pit and confirming it activates
- ☐ **Inspect decks, patios, and fences** for winter warping, rot, or loose fasteners
- ☐ **Power-wash exterior surfaces** to remove winter grime and organic buildup
- ☐ **Check irrigation systems and outdoor faucets** for freeze damage
- ☐ **Replace HVAC filters** and set a monthly reminder
- ☐ **Inspect the attic and basement** for moisture stains or pest activity
- ☐ **Check that landscaping still slopes away from the home**

● **Pro Tip:** Take photos of your roof every spring and fall. Comparing images over time can help you spot missing shingles or flashing damage before leaks develop.

● **Safety Warning:** Never work on a roof during wet or windy conditions. Use proper fall protection, and if you're unsure, hire a qualified roofing professional.

Summer Checklist

Summer maintenance is about keeping your cooling system from working harder than it has to, and staying ahead of the pests and heat damage that build up quietly.

- ☐ **Change HVAC filters monthly** during peak summer use
- ☐ **Clean the AC condenser unit**, clearing leaves and trimming plants back at least two feet
- ☐ **Check attic insulation and ventilation**
- ☐ **Inspect exterior paint and caulking** for sun damage
- ☐ **Check for pest entry points** — carpenter ants and termites are most active in summer heat
- ☐ **Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors** and replace batteries
- ☐ **Inspect deck or patio sealant**
- ☐ **Clean the dryer vent** — lint buildup is a leading cause of house fires
- ☐ **Check grading around the home** for erosion
- ☐ **Inspect and repair window screens**
- ☐ **Check the garage door mechanism and safety sensors**

🔧 **Quick Tip:** A \$15 HVAC filter replaced every 60–90 days can help maintain airflow and reduce strain on your heating and cooling system. Neglecting filter changes may contribute to higher energy use and shorten equipment life over time.

Fall Checklist

Fall maintenance is a race against the first freeze — everything left undone here becomes a winter emergency instead of a fall task.

- ☐ **Clean gutters and downspouts again** once leaves have fully dropped
- ☐ **Inspect the roof and flashing** while it's still warm enough for minor repairs
- ☐ **Service the furnace or heating system** — the single highest-priority fall task
- ☐ **Seal drafts** around windows, doors, and exterior penetrations
- ☐ **Drain and shut off outdoor faucets and irrigation systems**
- ☐ **Inspect the chimney and flue**, and schedule a professional sweep if you use a fireplace
- ☐ **Check weatherstripping** on doors and the garage
- ☐ **Test the heating system** and replace filters
- ☐ **Inspect attic and basement insulation**
- ☐ **Rake leaves and clear debris** away from the foundation and vents
- ☐ **Store or cover outdoor furniture**
- ☐ **Check smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries**

🔧 **Pro Tip:** Book your furnace service appointment in early fall, before the first cold snap. HVAC companies fill their schedules fast once temperatures drop.

Winter Checklist

Winter maintenance is about limiting damage from cold you can't control — the goal is catching stress on your systems before it becomes a failure.

- ☐ **Monitor for ice dams** along roof edges
- ☐ **Insulate exposed pipes**, especially in garages, crawl spaces, and exterior walls

- ☐ **Keep a slow drip on faucets** during extreme cold
- ☐ **Check attic ventilation**
- ☐ **Test the heating system regularly** and change filters monthly
- ☐ **Check for drafts** near windows, doors, and outlets
- ☐ **Clear snow safely** from walkways and, when necessary, roof edges
- ☐ **Check carbon monoxide detectors**
- ☐ **Inspect garage door insulation and seals**
- ☐ **Keep gutters clear of ice buildup** where safe to do so
- ☐ **Check emergency supplies** — flashlights, batteries, backup heat source

● **Safety Warning:** If a pipe has frozen but hasn't burst, warm it gradually with a hair dryer, heating pad, or warm towels, working from the faucet end toward the blockage. Never use an open flame.

Seasonal Home Maintenance Toolkit

Basic hand tools: Ladder, screwdriver set and adjustable wrench, caulking gun and exterior-grade caulk, utility knife and duct tape, flashlight or headlamp.

Seasonal-specific items: Gutter scoop and heavy-duty gloves, hose attachment for sump pump testing, pipe insulation sleeves or heat tape, weatherstripping tape and door sweeps, extra HVAC filters bought in bulk, spare detector batteries.

● **Safety Warning:** Never work on a ladder or roof alone. Falls are one of the most common home-maintenance injuries.

When to call a professional instead of reaching for a tool: Roof repairs above a single story, chimney sweeps, gas line work, and anything inside your electrical panel carry a level of risk that isn't worth the money saved by doing it yourself.

Maintenance Calendar

Season	Key Focus	Top Priority Tasks
Spring (Mar-May)	Find winter damage before spring rain does	Roof inspection, gutter cleaning, AC servicing
Summer (Jun-Aug)	Keep cooling systems from overworking	AC maintenance, dryer vent cleaning, pest checks
Fall (Sep-Nov)	Get ahead of the first freeze	Furnace service, gutter cleaning, sealing drafts
Winter (Dec-Feb)	Limit damage from cold you can't control	Pipe insulation, ice dam monitoring, heating checks

Seasonal Maintenance Cost Guide

Prices vary by region, home size, and contractor — treat these as general planning ranges rather than quotes.

Task	Typical DIY Cost	Typical Professional Cost	Cost If Neglected
HVAC filter replacement	\$10–\$25 per filter	\$30–\$50 (bundled)	\$150–\$500+ in reduced efficiency
Gutter cleaning	\$0–\$30 (supplies)	\$100–\$250 per visit	\$5,000–\$15,000+ in foundation damage

AC servicing (spring)	Not recommended DIY	\$100–\$250 per visit	\$3,000–\$7,000+ for early failure
Furnace servicing (fall)	Not recommended DIY	\$100–\$300 per visit	\$3,000–\$6,000+ for replacement
Roof inspection	\$0 (visual check)	\$150–\$400 per visit	\$1,000–\$10,000+ in water damage
Pipe insulation	\$20–\$60 in materials	\$150–\$400 full coverage	\$1,000–\$5,000+ per burst pipe
Dryer vent cleaning	\$20–\$40 in tools	\$100–\$200 per visit	Risk of house fire
Chimney sweep	Not recommended DIY	\$150–\$300 per visit	\$1,000–\$4,000+ in fire risk damage
Sump pump test/replace	\$0 test / \$150–\$400 replace	\$200–\$600 installed	\$10,000+ in flood damage

● **Money Saver:** Add up the "typical professional cost" column and you're looking at a few hundred dollars a year for full seasonal coverage — a fraction of even one item in the "cost if neglected" column.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Waiting until something breaks.** By the time a furnace fails outright, it's usually been losing efficiency for months.
- **Skipping gutter cleaning.** A single missed cleaning cycle is often enough for water to start pooling against the foundation.
- **Ignoring HVAC filter changes.** A filter left in too long forces the blower motor to work harder.
- **Forgetting to winterize outdoor faucets.** This one step prevents the majority of frozen and burst spigots.
- **DIY-ing tasks that need a professional.** A mistake can void insurance coverage if it's later a factor in damage.
- **Not keeping maintenance records.** Without a log, warranty claims come down to your word against the manufacturer's.
- **Overlooking attic and basement checks.** Moisture and pest problems start in the spaces you don't walk through daily.
- **Treating maintenance as a one-time event.** A checklist done once tells you nothing about what's changed since.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often should I service my HVAC system?

Twice a year — get the AC checked in spring and the furnace checked in fall. It sounds like overkill, but servicing before each system's busy season catches small problems before they turn into a breakdown on the one day you actually need the system to work.

What is the most important seasonal maintenance task?

If you only do one thing, clean your gutters. Overflowing gutters send water straight to your foundation, and foundation repairs are some of the most expensive and disruptive fixes a home can need.

Can I do seasonal home maintenance myself, or do I need a professional?

Plenty of it, yes — filters, gutters, and caulking are all reasonable DIY jobs. Roofs, chimneys, gas lines, and electrical panels are a different story; get those done by a licensed pro.

How much does seasonal home maintenance cost per year?

It depends on your home's size and age, but plan for a modest yearly budget covering filters, minor repairs, and seasonal HVAC servicing — a fraction of what a single emergency repair costs.

What should be on a fall maintenance checklist specifically?

Furnace servicing, a second gutter cleaning after leaves drop, sealing drafts, draining outdoor faucets, and a chimney check if you use it.

How do I know if my gutters need cleaning?

Watch for water spilling over the sides during rain, plants growing out of the gutter, sagging sections, or streaks on the siding underneath.

What's the single best habit for reducing home repair costs long-term?

Doing the same small tasks on the same schedule, every year, without fail.

Final Thoughts

Home maintenance doesn't need to be overwhelming, and it doesn't require special skills to get right. Breaking tasks into seasonal checklists turns a vague to-do list into a manageable one, and gives you a clear reason to revisit your home's systems before problems have a chance to develop. A few preventative tasks completed each season — done consistently, not perfectly — tend to matter more over ten years than any single big repair ever will.