

FALL HOME MAINTENANCE: 10 JOBS BEFORE WINTER

DAVE'S FIX-IT PORCH · FREE PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

DIFFICULTY: Easy to moderate · TIME: A couple of weekends · COST: Mostly free · TOOLS: Ladder, gloves, caulk gun

1. GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

- ☐ Scoop out leaves and gunk (wear gloves), then flush with a hose.
- ☐ Downspouts should drain 4 to 6 feet from the foundation.
- ☐ Ladder safety: firm, level ground and three points of contact.

2. OUTDOOR FAUCETS AND HOSES

- ☐ Disconnect, drain, and store every hose (even on frost-free faucets).
- ☐ Shut the interior valve, then open the outdoor faucet to drain.
- ☐ Add a foam faucet cover.

3. SEAL THE DRAFTS

- ☐ Check door weatherstripping; look for daylight around the edges.
- ☐ Add or replace the door sweep.
- ☐ Re-caulk cracked gaps around window trim.

4. THE FURNACE

- ☐ Replace the filter (arrow points toward the furnace).
- ☐ Test the heat before the first cold night.
- ☐ Schedule a yearly tune-up with a licensed pro for gas furnaces.

5. SMOKE AND CO ALARMS

- ☐ Press the test button on every alarm.
- ☐ Replace batteries as needed.
- ☐ Check the manufacture date on the back; replace per the label or manual.

6. FIREPLACE AND CHIMNEY

- ☐ Have the chimney inspected and cleaned before the first fire.
- ☐ Make sure the damper opens and closes smoothly.
- ☐ Stack firewood off the ground and away from the house.

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7. ROOF, FROM THE GROUND

- ☐ Use binoculars, not a roof walk.
- ☐ Look for missing, cracked, or curled shingles.
- ☐ Check flashing around the chimney and vents.

8. YARD AND TREES

- ☐ Trim branches away from the roof and siding.
- ☐ Rake leaves off the lawn.
- ☐ Clean and store the mower per its manual.

9. PIPES IN COLD SPOTS

- ☐ Insulate exposed pipes in the garage, crawl space, and attic.
- ☐ Find the main water shut-off and show everyone where it is.

10. WINTER KIT

- ☐ Snow shovel and ice melt within reach.
- ☐ Flashlights with fresh batteries.
- ☐ Test the sump pump with a bucket of water.

CALL A PRO IF...

- ☐ Gutters are two or more stories up and you're not comfortable on a ladder.
- ☐ You smell gas or have furnace trouble. Smell gas? Leave and call your gas utility from outside.
- ☐ You see roof damage, or big trees are near power lines.