

Nine To-Do's to Save Time and Money this Spring

1. Complete pre-season maintenance of outdoor power equipment and garden tools.



Inspect for wear and damage on lawn mowers, pressure washers, string trimmers, edgers and other outdoor power and landscaping equipment. Review owner's manuals, replace worn or damaged parts with new components and clean the equipment. Stock

up on degreaser, filters, spark plugs and other essentials.

2. Dedicate a few hours per weekend to organizing closets, cabinets, basements, attics and other storage locations.

The annual home organization work dubbed "spring cleaning" doesn't have to wait until the spring. Avoid several organization projects in one weekend. Instead, tackle smaller organization projects over many weekends for greater efficiency.



3. Clean off refrigerator condenser coils.



"Dirty, dust-covered condenser coils require refrigerators to work harder to remove heat," said Chris Hall, president and co-founder of RepairClinic.com. "A long-handled bristle brush and a vacuum make it easy to clean off the coils."

4. Stock up on water filters.

"Refrigerator ice maker and water dispenser filters should be replaced at least every six months but depending on usage, homeowners may need to replace the filters more frequently," said Hall. "Increased temperatures often bring more frequent use of ice makers and water dispensers."

5. Check on emergency-prevention efforts.

Replace the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and then test them. Check the expiration dates on first-aid kits and fire extinguishers and replace as needed. Review fire escape and other emergency plans.

6. Clean out dryer vents.

"Lint may be building up to dangerous levels in your dryer's venting system," said Hall. "Dryer lint buildup restricts air flow and can result in a fire."



The lint trap should be cleaned out after every load. At least once per year, the dryer should be disassembled and the interior vacuumed with a long attachment. Also annually, the dryer's entire venting system from the dryer to the outside must be cleaned out. A dryer vent brush will assist with this.

7. Schedule professional furnace and air conditioner duct cleaning.

Clean furnace and air conditioner ducts help the air to flow more freely. Air duct cleaning every five years is important; homes with occupants who suffer from allergies may need to have this done more frequently.

8. Inspect home appliances for worn components and changes in performance.

"Appliances often show warning signs before they have major problems," said Hall. "Take the time to inspect them and replace parts as needed to keep them running efficiently. Pay attention to noise, the amount of time required to complete their jobs, leaking and other performance changes."

9. Prune trees and shrubs.

"By mid to late winter, your trees and shrubs have been dormant for a significant period of time. They may also have winter-storm damage. Now is an ideal time for pruning to enable spring growth."

