

MONEYSENSE HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST: SPRING

www.moneysense.ca/author/romana-king

TASK	WHY DO IT	HOW TO DO IT	TIME	MATERIAL COST	PRO COSTS
HVAC: Replace furnace filters	To keep your furnace running efficiently, you need to change the filters every three months. These filters collect airborne debris and allergens. Keeping a dirty filter means your furnace has to work twice as hard to push out heat.	Slide your old filter out (and put it in the garbage. Slide the new filter in. When in doubt, check your furnace's manual (either hard copy or online). If your filter is not disposable you will need to hand wash the filter to get rid of all dirt and debris. Remember, use a non-toxic cleaner and tap water—nothing else.	5 minutes	\$20 to \$160	n/a
HVAC: Unwrap a/c unit	When you first unwrap your A/C unit you'll want to inspect the appliance—making sure no animals or debris got lodged in the unit during the winter. If your unit uses a drain pan you'll also want to inspect, and if necessary, empty the pan. Also check connection hoses for any visible tears, rips or holes.	Unwrap and visually inspect the unit. But before you touch or fiddle with anything make sure the power to the A/C is off—actually go and flip the breaker that provides power to the A/C. That last thing you want when you're fishing out a bird's nest from the A/C is to have the fan start to spin. Next visually inspect the hoses and, if necessary, replace the insulation that protects the hoses and wires.	15 minutes	\$0	n/a
INTERNAL: Check and clean your oven's range hood filters.	You probably used your oven quite a lot over the winter and that means a lot of grease and food grime got caught in the range hood vent filters. To keep your vent working properly you'll need to remove and wash these filters (or replace the filters if they are disposable). To wash, you'll need a good degreaser and some scrubbing power.	You should be able to slide the hood's filter out. If you have difficulty, consult the oven's owner manual. If you didn't keep your manual go online.	30 minutes	\$0	n/a
INTERNAL: Replace the batteries for all fire alarm, carbon monoxide and radon gas detectors	This task is often overlooked...even though it's absolutely critical for your family's safety. For that reason, it's good to put it on the Spring maintenance checklist.	Remove the old batteries (dispose of them appropriately please) and insert new batteries. Repeat again next year. Also, if you have testers built in to the alarms, consider pushing and testing to make sure the new batteries and detectors are working properly.	30 minutes	\$25	n/a
INTERNAL: Lubricate door and garage door hinges	Through the course of the year grime and dirt build up on door hinges and garage door pulleys. To keep doors opening and closing smoothly use some lubricant.	First wash the hinges with a little soap and water to remove the debris. Then spray liberally with a standard lubricant.	30 minutes	\$20	n/a
EXTERNAL: Power wash siding and external structures	This good scrub gets rid of dirt and debris but also helps prevent insect larvae from hatching.	If you own a power washer now is a great time to give all external structures on your property a good wash. If you don't own a power washer you can always rent heavier duty models at your local hardware store. Talk to a few neighbours and you can all chip in and use the power washer for an afternoon—thereby splitting the costs.	4 hours	\$0 (if you own a power washer) or \$100 to rent one for 4 hours	n/a
EXTERNAL: Inspect driveway	Patching your driveway is not just about aesthetics. Inspecting and patching the driveway also prolongs the driveways life (and any surrounding hardscape and landscape). That's because holes and cracks allow water to seep in and, over time, the water erodes the base underneath your driveway.	Visually inspect the driveway. For small holes and cracks use driveway filler (starts at \$30 a bucket). For more complex or larger problems consider hiring a professional.	1 to 3 hours	\$30 to \$100	n/a
PLUMBING: Check all internal drains	Floor drains aren't just to allow water to escape should a flood occur. Floor drains also act as a defence against sewage gas from entering your home. Water acts as a physical barrier to this gas, preventing methane from seeping back into your home.	Make sure water drains properly through each drain and top up floor drains with a cup or two of water and tablespoon of mineral oil. The mineral oil helps the water from evaporating too quickly while the water prevents gases from seeping back into your house.	15 minutes to 1 hour	\$5	n/a
PLUMBING: Check all external drains	Water can't escape through a drain if the drain is plugged. Worse: if it can't escape using a drain, water will find another path. This usually leads to foundation damage as well as other erosion problems	Make sure leaves, ice and debris are removed so drains remain unplugged.	15 minutes to 1 hour	\$0	n/a
PLUMBING: Check any installed sump pumps	No one wants to take apart their basement because a sump pump (or backflow valve) failed. So it's important to verify that these flood mitigation devices are working well.	Take apart and test your sump pump to make sure it's not clogged and working efficiently and effectively.	1 hour	\$0	n/a