

What the pros do to maintain your home

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Want to ensure your home is ready for winter and not lacking any regular maintenance? You can hire a pro.

Here are some tips and suggestions from Pete Frizzell, of Overland Park, Kan., owner of Home Maintenance Solutions in Kansas City, Mo.

Q: What types of maintenance do you do inside the house?

A: In a kitchen, for example, we clean behind the refrigerator and inspect for leaks. We replace the water filter on the refrigerator. We deodorize and inspect the garbage disposal. We clean range hood filters. We clean dishwasher filters. We seal natural stone countertops. We inspect plumbing connections at the sink. We clean faucet and sprayer aerators. We inspect outlets. We caulk joints between sink and countertops. We adjust and tighten cabinet doors and drawers. We have a checklist of things we do in the bathrooms and other rooms, including cleaning inside light fixtures — the kind of things people forget to do.

Q: What about exterior maintenance?

A: We clean gutters and inspect them. We inspect the chimney. We clean oil stains from garage floors. There's an extensive checklist.

Q: Why should someone have maintenance performed on their house?

A: A lot of homeowners don't know what to look for. I've saved clients money. One of my first clients had a window leak behind the couch. I was able to detect the leak and have the windows repaired, which cost a few thousand dollars. A neighbor with the same builder and window manufacturer had replaced windows for $40,000. I recently identified a nonworking sump pump, which prevented flooding problems.

Q: What type of home maintenance is under the radar?

A: Hot water heaters. We drain and flush them because they can burst. Also, refrigerators last longer if you clean the coils.

Q: What should we do in preventive maintenance to winterize our homes?

A: Inspect the weather-stripping and make sure the furnace is tuned up.