

TREB: Preventative medicine for your home and wallet

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TREB president Mark McLean.

The purchase of a home is one of the biggest financial investments that most people will ever make, so protecting that investment is paramount. That's why it's crucial to stick to a comprehensive home maintenance plan. Constant upkeep of your home will help it run efficiently, save you money and ensure a painless transaction when it's time to move on.

Today, I'm going to offer you some advice on how you can implement a long-term, low-cost program that could limit the number of repairs you'll need to undergo when it's time to sell.

While most of these tips apply to freehold homeowners, everyone should read on to see what applies to their situation. This article also provides a sense of the financial obligations of good home maintenance for first-time buyers.

Regular Improvements

Monitoring your home on a regular basis will help you spot any potential problems before they turn into major headaches. Some suggestions for annual upkeep:

Plumbing

- Test faucets
- Clean drains
- Test main shut off valve & hot water tank pressure valve
- Clean sump pump

Outside structure

- Replace weather stripping around windows & doors
- Fill cracks with epoxy
- Recaulk foundation

Roof

- Replace loose shingles
- Schedule chimney cleaning & roof inspection

Foundation

- Fill cracks with epoxy
- Clean up mould and mildew

Electrical

- Check bulbs, outlets and cords
- Check detectors and replace batteries
- Clean lint traps, hood vents and fans

Heating, ventilation and A/C

- Replace furnace filters (every 3 months)
- Schedule annual furnace inspection
- Cover A/C unit in the fall

Drainage and landscaping

- Clean eavestroughs and down spouts (twice a year)
- Inspect and patch driveway
- Regrade soil away from home

Long-term improvements

Long-term improvements occur less frequently, but may cost a bit more than the average home maintenance routine. Some improvements you may consider working into your long-term budget include:

5 years:

- Replace sump pump

10 years:

- Replace hot water heater
- Install new windows
- Repaint home exterior
- Replace smoke, carbon monoxide & radon detectors

15 years:

- Replace external doors
- Replace central A/C
- Repave driveway

20 years:

- Replace roof shingles
- Replace furnace

25-30 years:

- Regrade property around foundation
- Replace eaves, soffits and fascia

Other maintenance tips

Consider creating a home maintenance schedule. That way, you'll ensure you stay on top of your home improvements, and prevent any unnecessary, and potentially costly surprises.

You may want to consider adding a budget for landscaping, fixtures and current finishes. These cosmetic improvements could increase your home's desirability, and potential value when it comes time to sell.

While this list isn't all-encompassing, homes are as unique as the homeowners themselves, this list can certainly help guide and ensure your home is more efficient and safe. I hope you're proud of your investment and wish you continued enjoyment of your home in the years to come.

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