

SPRING CLEANING 101

It's that time of the year again... Pick a weekend and enlist the family for Spring cleaning. Many hands make light work! Remember to tour the interior and exterior of your home, and make a list of any needed seasonal maintenance. It's also a good time of year to schedule a termite inspection or pest control maintenance.

Feeling Inspired?

Try some of these budget-friendly weekend projects!

- Paint or wallpaper a room
- Update the cabinet and drawer knobs in your kitchen/bathroom
- Change out light fixtures or add a dimmer switch
- Install new faucets and shower heads
- Assemble new bookcases or shelving to add storage space
- Hang crown molding in a room
- Spruce up your entrance by painting the front door or adding some potted plants
- Add a birdbath or feeder for your feathered friends
- Build a fence trellis
- Plant a mini herb garden for fresh greens year-round!

Outdoor Spaces

- Having your home's exterior and windows power-washed won't just make your home look sharp, it also will prevent the growth of mold and mildew that feed on grime. If you're not comfortable deciding whether your home's exterior can handle the force that pressure-washing nozzles exert, hire a professional to do the work. Don't overlook places like the garage door and deck.
- Use a sunny Saturday to scrape, prime and paint peeling spots on trim or woodwork. By making touch-ups now, you'll protect wood against Summer's heat and moisture—and prevent a more difficult paint job come fall.
- Check to be sure your windows and doors are well sealed to help keep the AC inside, and replace caulking as needed to prevent leaks. Most local utility companies offer free home energy assessments, but don't wait for the first hot day! Air conditioning firms will give better service when they're not busy.
- Clear away any remaining dead foliage and weeds from beds and lawn. New growth will be protected from damage or disease. Trimming back shrubbery and trees in the spring improves your home's curb appeal, but is also an important preparation for hurricane season.
- Plant gardens and add mulch to flowerbeds - Spring weather can wash away the mulch in your beds. Use a rake to fluff and level your mulch - ideally, you want 3-4 inches.

- Clean grill and patio furniture
- Check the locks on your swimming pool enclosure and replace them if needed.

Inspect the roof for winter damage: leaks, missing or broken shingles or tiles. Arrange for any needed repairs early; roofing contractors can be hard to find during summer's construction season.

Bedrooms

- Empty dressers and cabinets and use a vacuum attachment to suck up any loose particles. Clean and organize your dresser(s) and nightstand(s)

Wash bedsheets and pillows. Whether made of natural fibers (such as down) or synthetic (often polyester), most pillows can be machine-washed - just double-check the label. This rids them of mold, bacteria, and odors. Place two pillows maximum per wash cycle and use a mild detergent. Make sure to thoroughly dry down and feather pillows, since dampness can lead to mold. Dry synthetic pillows on low heat and add a couple of tennis balls covered in clean socks to re-fluff the pillows.

Flip and rotate your mattress. This will even out the weight and maximize its lifespan.

Take closet inventory. Go through each article to determine if you should keep or toss.

Store winter clothing to make more room for spring and summer wear.

Label all storage totes and boxes.

Closets

Kitchen

Wash surfaces and cabinets. The tops of cabinets and the fridge may be sticky from grease, so a solution of warm water and dish washing liquid will work best. You can also use the mixture in drawers and on shelves. Pay attention to the utensils drawer and the pantry, since they collect the most crumbs.

Clean and organize kitchen cabinets and drawers. Straighten cups and glasses; plates and bowls; storage containers; pots and pans, and bakeware.

Clean refrigerator coils. It will boost energy efficiency, saving you money in the long run.

Clean the microwave; dishwasher; oven and stove-top; and refrigerator and freezer.

Clean and organize the pantry. Throw out any expired products. Don't forget to check the freshness of your herbs & spices.

Dining Room

Take down any light fixtures and gently wash and dry them before replacing. Remember to dust light bulbs.

Clean and de-clutter hutch cabinets and drawers.

Wash table linens.

Disinfect table and wipe down all chairs.

Disinfect remote controls and gaming devices. Clean and dust electronics.

Spray compressed air into crevices. Then, moving from top to bottom, use microfiber or electrostatic cloths. Clean underneath speakers, stereos, computers, DVD players and TVs too. Wipe away from ventilation areas so you don't push dust back in. Clean the TV screen by simply wiping it down with a microfiber cloth lightly dampened with distilled water -- you'll be surprised at how much clearer the picture will be!

Wash windows.

While at the window area, check drapes and window treatments. Vacuum any dust; Clean the drapes as instructed on their care labels. Keep in mind that many natural-fiber fabrics can be washed at home, saving an expensive trip to the cleaners! Light drapes can go in the dryer on the fluff cycle.

Clean light fixtures and lampshades, inside & out. Give light bulbs a wipe with a damp microfiber cloth, since a dirty bulb emits 20% less light.

Living Room

Dust all surfaces, including crown moldings and baseboards; ceiling corners; ceiling fans; shelves, bookcases, and other furniture; and around mirrors, picture frames, and wall hangings

Disinfect doorknobs, pulls, and light switches.

Switch ceiling fans to spin clockwise.

Bathrooms

Take medicine cabinet inventory. Clean out expired medications and vitamins.

Clean and refill soap dish or pump and lotion dispensers.

Clean/disinfect counters, toilets, mirrors, sinks, and faucets.

Unclog drains

Clean and repair gutters and downspouts every spring before heavy rains begin.

De-scum the shower head. Pour hot water and vinegar into a zip-lock bag and secure it around the shower head with durable tape, like painter's tape. Let it soak for eight hours, then brush off any remaining deposit particles with a toothbrush.

Bathrooms

Scrub the bathtub/shower. Don't forget to clean the shower curtain and liner.

Wash towels and floor mat.

Home Office

Consider backing up your paperwork electronically by scanning important documents to file on the computer. Protect your electronic equipment by plugging them into UPS battery backups, which provide safe, essential extra power for your electronics in the event of a power outage.

Review insurance policies, contracts, and household inventories. Clean out files and shred unneeded documents.

Clean your keyboard and mouse, and organize desk drawers.

Laundry Room

Clothes dryers should be regularly maintained and vent systems should be checked. Clean the dryer exhaust duct to help reduce the risk of fire. Check the hoses to your washing machine for leaks. Replace hoses at least once every 5 years.

Clean inside washing machine, and vacuum behind/under washer and dryer.

Organize cleaning products and other contents on shelving.

Clean out your garage storage. Create a space for sporting goods, camping equipment, and garden tools. Hold a garage sale and turn trash into cash!

Garage

