

FREE FROM GRANDPA WALT

The Seasonal Home Maintenance Checklist

The simple jobs that stop small problems from turning into expensive repairs. For homeowners and renters.



Hey there, kiddo.

Most big repair bills start as little problems nobody noticed. A slow drip. A clogged gutter. A filter that never got changed.

Print this out, stick it on the fridge, and knock out one season at a time. It's the cheapest insurance you'll ever buy.

Walt

What's inside

- Monthly 10-minute checks
- Spring checklist
- Summer checklist
- Fall checklist
- Winter checklist
- Renter's deposit protection tips
- When to DIY vs. call a pro
- Emergency shutoff finder

Grandpa Walt is an AI character. Tips are general guidance, not professional advice. Always follow your manufacturer's instructions and local codes, and call a licensed pro for electrical, gas, structural or major plumbing work. Renters: check your lease before doing any repair.



Every Month

10 minutes, first weekend of the month

Walt's rule: pick the same day every month. Put it on your phone calendar. If it's not scheduled, it doesn't get done.

Monthly quick checks

Homeowners & renters

- ☐ Press the test button on every smoke and carbon monoxide alarm

Replace batteries if they chirp or the test is weak.

- ☐ Look under every sink with a flashlight

Feel for damp wood, look for drips, stains or a musty smell.

- ☐ Check your HVAC air filter

Replace it when it looks gray or dusty, usually every 1 to 3 months.

- ☐ Press "Test" then "Reset" on GFCI outlets

The ones in kitchens, bathrooms, garages and outdoors.

- ☐ Run water in drains you rarely use

Guest bath, basement sink. Keeps the trap full so sewer smells stay out.

- ☐ Clean the range hood filter and garbage disposal

Soak the filter in hot soapy water. Grind ice cubes in the disposal.

- ☐ Listen for a toilet that runs on its own

Often a worn flapper, a cheap part and a quick fix.

Emergency shutoff finder

Do this once, today

- ☐ Main water shutoff is located: _____

Often near the water heater, in a basement, crawlspace or by the street.

- ☐ Electrical panel is located: _____

Label the breakers if they aren't labeled.

- ☐ Gas shutoff is located (if you have gas): _____

If you smell gas, leave first and call the gas company from outside.

Tag it: hang a bright tag on the main water shutoff. When a pipe bursts, you won't have time to go looking.



Spring

March, April, May: clean up after winter

Walt's take: winter is hard on a house. Spring is when you find out what it did.

Outside

Homeowners

- ☐ Clean the gutters and make sure downspouts point away from the house
- ☐ Look at the roof from the ground with binoculars
Missing, curled or cracked shingles. Don't climb up there unless you know what you're doing.
- ☐ Walk around the foundation and look for new cracks or pooling water
- ☐ Check outdoor faucets and hoses for leaks after the freeze
- ☐ Have your AC serviced before the first hot week
Rinse leaves and dirt off the outdoor unit with a hose.

Inside

Homeowners & renters

- ☐ Check window and door screens for holes
- ☐ Look at the caulk around tubs, showers and sinks
Cracked or moldy caulk lets water behind the wall.
- ☐ Clean the dryer lint trap housing and check the vent hose for kinks
- ☐ Check ceilings under bathrooms for new stains
- ☐ Flush a few gallons from the water heater drain valve
Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Homeowners only.



Renters this season

Found a leak, a stain or a broken screen? Report it to your landlord in writing (email or the tenant portal) and take a dated photo. Written reports protect your deposit.

Spring finished on: _____



Summer

June, July, August: keep it cool and dry

Walt's take: heat and humidity are when mold and bugs move in. Keep things dry and sealed.

Outside

Homeowners

- ☐ Trim bushes and branches back from the siding and roof
- ☐ Check the deck or porch for loose boards, nails or soft spots
- ☐ Look for gaps around pipes and wires where bugs can get in
- ☐ Make sure sprinklers aren't spraying the house

Inside

Homeowners & renters

- ☐ Run the bathroom fan during every shower and for 20 minutes after
The easiest way to keep mold out of a bathroom.
- ☐ Vacuum the refrigerator coils
Underneath or behind the fridge. Dusty coils make it work harder.
- ☐ Check the AC drain line near the indoor unit for clogs or drips
- ☐ Clean or replace the AC filter more often while it runs hard
- ☐ Lubricate squeaky door hinges and the garage door rollers
- ☐ Check grout in showers and backsplashes for cracks

Renters this season

AC not keeping up? Check and change the filter first if your lease makes it your job. If it still isn't cooling, report it in writing instead of calling a repair company yourself.

Summer finished on: _____



Fall

September, October, November: get ready for the cold

Walt's take: fall is the most important season. A frozen pipe in January starts with a hose you forgot in October.

Outside

Homeowners

- ☐ Disconnect garden hoses and drain them
Shut off and drain outdoor faucets if they have an inside valve.
- ☐ Clean the gutters again after the leaves drop
- ☐ Have the furnace or heat pump serviced before the first cold snap
- ☐ Have the chimney inspected if you use a fireplace
- ☐ Seal gaps around windows and doors with caulk

Inside

Homeowners & renters

- ☐ Check weatherstripping on exterior doors
If you can see daylight around the door, you're paying to heat the outdoors.
- ☐ Switch ceiling fans to spin clockwise on low
Pushes warm air back down.
- ☐ Test the sump pump by pouring a bucket of water in the pit (if you have one)
- ☐ Replace the HVAC filter before heating season
- ☐ Test smoke and CO alarms and replace batteries if needed



Renters this season

Drafty windows or doors? Ask your landlord about weatherstripping before winter. Removable window film and draft stoppers are renter-friendly and come with you when you move.

Fall finished on: _____



Winter

December, January, February: protect the pipes

Walt's take: water damage is the repair that hurts most. Winter is when pipes freeze and burst.

During a hard freeze

Homeowners & renters

- ☐ Open cabinet doors under sinks on outside walls
Lets warm air reach the pipes.
- ☐ Let faucets on outside walls drip slowly on the coldest nights
- ☐ Keep the heat set no lower than about 55°F, even when you're away
- ☐ Know where your main water shutoff is (see page 2)

Regular winter checks

Homeowners & renters

- ☐ Watch for icicles and ice buildup along the roof edge
Big ice dams can push water under shingles.
- ☐ Check windows for heavy condensation or frost on the inside
- ☐ Keep exterior vents clear of snow (dryer, furnace, water heater)
- ☐ Change the HVAC filter and test smoke and CO alarms
- ☐ Look in the attic for frost or damp insulation (homeowners)



Renters this season

No heat or a frozen pipe is usually an urgent repair for your landlord. Call right away and follow up in writing. Rules vary by state, so check your lease and local tenant laws.

Winter finished on: _____



Protect Your Money

Renters' deposit tips, and when to call a pro

Renters: keep your deposit

- ☐ Photograph every room the day you move in
Walls, floors, inside the oven and fridge. Save the dates.
- ☐ Report problems in writing, every time
- ☐ Use removable hooks instead of nails when you can
- ☐ Patch small nail holes before you move out
- ☐ Deep clean the kitchen and bathrooms before your final walkthrough
- ☐ Ask for the move-out walkthrough and take photos again

Call a licensed pro for

- Anything involving gas or a gas smell
- Electrical panel work or new wiring
- Water coming through a ceiling
- Sewage backing up into drains
- Roof work or anything high up
- Cracks in the foundation that are growing
- Mold covering a large area

Walt's rule: if it can burn, shock, flood or fall on you, call a pro.

Want to know what every repair SHOULD cost?

Most folks overpay because they don't know the going rate. My "Call a Pro or DIY?" Cost Cheat Sheet covers common home repairs: what it costs to do it yourself, what a pro usually charges, and which jobs aren't worth paying for.

Get the Cost Cheat Sheet: link in my Instagram bio

Follow along: new DIY fixes every week on Instagram at [@grandpawaltdiy](#). Comment your toughest house problem and I might make a video about it.