

Homeownership is one of life's great milestones, but it also comes with a lot of responsibilities that many people overlook. Poor home maintenance can cost you a lot of money. Proper maintenance and [inspections](#) can help you prevent a disaster and protect your investment.

## **Roofing and Gutters**

It is a sensible idea to [inspect your roof once or twice a year](#), before and after fall and winter. If you have missing roof tiles or shingles, these could cause massive damage to your home in a short amount of time. Missing shingles equal leaks in your roof. Pay close attention to areas like chimneys and skylights, as these are the areas most prone to damage.

### **When inspecting the Roof**

Look for damaged roofing and nails popped up or tar that has separated or torn loose. When you can see nails uncovered in the shingles this is a sign that sealants are failing. A simple fix is to recoat visible nails with roofing tar.



Look for damaged or cracked roof vents. This is a common problem with plastic roof vents. Cracked roof vents can turn into a source of water penetration. A temporary fix would be to caulk the cracks until you could get them replaced. If replacing I would only recommend going with a metal roof vent.

Drainage from the roof is important, and blocked gutters can cause water damage to your home's siding or brickwork. Leaves from the fall and even children's toys like rubber balls and frisbees can block guttering and cause water to overflow and cause costly damage.

## **Plumbing and Toilets**

According to [5-Star Plumbing](#), water damage can be incredibly expensive to repair, so every homeowner should be proactive and take steps to check for leaks in their home as well as

preventative steps to protect their plumbing system.



Clear your sinks and drains of cooking fat and hair using appropriate chemicals, and check pipes for signs of leakage such as rust or limescale build-up and damp patches. Leaking toilets can cost a lot of money in utility bills. Check if your toilet is leaking internally by adding some food coloring to the tank. Leave it for an hour or so, without flushing, and check the toilet bowl for signs of the food coloring. If there is some coloring in the bowl, then you have a small leak that could be costing you money.

Be sure to check valves and hoses. Burst water hoses cause millions of dollars in damage to homes every year. Valves and hoses should be assessed for damage and wear or simply replaced due to age.

## **Toilets Failure**

Over time some of the components on your toilet will fail, this includes, wax ring, handle,

assembly, and base seal.

“One of the most common plumbing calls we get are from people with running toilets. Often either the flapper has worn out or the toilet assembly needs to be completely replaced,” explains Stuart McHenry who is the Co-founder of [Office Gator](#) a phone service for plumbers.

Over time wax rings fail. Look for signs of leakage all around the toilet. The floor may be raised from absorption of the leak. Make sure that the silicone seal has a gap near the back and does not completely seal. Plumbers do this to give a leak a place to go. If you do a full silicone seal around the base of the toilet a leak has not where to go but down. In addition it will most likely cause flooring damage before you notice it.

## **Air Conditioning and Air Filters**

Your home heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system will require some regular maintenance too.



Poor maintenance of your HVAC can prevent it from working effectively, cost you extra money in running costs, and also be a hazard to your health. Air filters should be replaced regularly, so look for [replacements](#) for your system. HEPA filters help remove particles in the air that can aggravate asthma and other breathing conditions and have been shown to be effective against bacteria and viruses including COVID-19.

Some air filters can be used for long periods of time, up to 6-12 months, depending on your system. Most use a standard size filter and are required to be changed anywhere from 30-90 days depending on the area you live in. In my dusty area we have to change our air filters every two months or the air filter will become overloaded and block the air flow.

## **Home Appliance Maintenance**

Washing machines require plumbing to work, and poorly installed or maintained water hoses can cause small leaks that grow quickly, and damage your home. [Make annual checks to your washing machine](#) to make sure it is connected properly and that the supply hose is

in good working order. When it comes to washing machine hoses I only used braided stainless steel. In addition, I replace them every 10 years no matter what. This is a great example of how \$30 in maintenance can save you thousands in damage.

Some refrigerators also have a water supply for making ice or supplying chilled water, so you should check their water supply hose regularly too. Also, check the seals around the chilled and frozen sections of your refrigerator to ensure they are in good condition and form a complete seal between the doors and the body of the appliance. Poor sealing is incredibly energy inefficient and will cost you money. Fridges also have a section of water line that needs to be checked and replaced just like a washing machine hose.

Maintaining a home can prevent major expensive failures. This doesn't mean you won't have to eventually replace items, it's still a good idea to [set money aside](#) for when a major improvement does need to be done such as heating system replacement or re-roofing your house.

With these tips, you should be able to protect your home and prevent damage that can cost thousands to repair, as well as being disruptive to you and your family's daily life.