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Spring cleaning tips and tricks



Spring cleaning can bring the revitalizing nature of this beloved time of year into your home.

STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

Spring is a time of year when change is in the air. Trees are budding, plants are flowering, and homes laden with dark or heavy fabrics and clutter could use some lightening up.

Spring cleaning projects are popular this time of year as residents take inventory of their living spaces and aim to declutter, clean and increase efficiency. Some people find the prospect of getting organized overwhelming. Here are some tips that can

help anyone master spring cleaning.

CREATE A PLAN

Make a checklist and establish a cleaning plan of attack. Focus on areas that are not regularly cleaned, as they probably need a little attention.

ASSEMBLE CLEANING KIT

Spring cleaning can be slowed down considerably if you don't have all of your

equipment at the ready. Items to have on hand include an all-purpose cleaner, concentrated cleaner, microfiber cloths, paper towels, mop, vacuum, dusters, and a squeegee. Adjust your equipment based on the task at hand.

GATHER MUSIC

Curate your cleaning playlist. Create a

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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SPRING CLEANING

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

playlist with songs that will get you moving and motivated to clean.

WORK FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

Work efficiently by cleaning shelves, ceiling fans and other elevated items first, as dust and debris will trickle down and need to be cleaned next.

GET A CARPET CLEANER

According to the experts at Clean That Up, carpets help filter indoor air by trapping debris and allergens. By deep cleaning carpets, homeowners can improve the indoor air quality of their homes. Use a carpet cleaner on a warm, dry day so that windows can be opened and cross breezes will help dry the damp rug.

CLEAN WINDOWS

Wash windows inside and out and utilize their screens to help brighten indoors spaces.

DEEP CLEAN THE KITCHEN

Clean out and disinfect the refrigerator by wiping it down with warm water and baking soda or a vinegar-and-water solution. While in the kitchen, set the oven to the self-clean function so it becomes cleaner as well.

Homeowners also can focus on cleaning curtains (including shower curtains), steam-cleaning upholstery, removing clutter from closets, cleaning out the dryer vent and duct tubing, wiping inside kitchen drawers, and vacuuming under beds and other furniture.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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Want your hardwood floors to last for generations? Use these expert tips

Solid hardwood floors are beautiful and timeless, adding value to any property. However, there's a misconception that real hardwood floors are difficult to maintain. The truth is that they can last for decades, as long as you follow a few simple steps on a regular schedule.

In fact, the time that goes into maintaining hardwood floors isn't much more extensive than any other flooring material. The key is to practice regular care and cleaning for your hardwood to keep grit and dirt from scratching the wood.

"Hardwood floors are special, and if properly taken care of, you can have a living, organic, premium floor that lasts for generations," said Jen Meska, director of Merchandising for LL Flooring (formerly Lumber Liquidators). "But to keep them in top shape, it's essential to have a regular cleaning schedule and be extra-mindful of any conditions in your home that could damage your floors."

TOOLS, TIPS, AND TRICKS

Meska says to start with the fundamental tools for caring for hardwood flooring: a dust mop for everyday cleaning, a vacuum for weekly cleaning, and a microfiber mop that can get damp (not wet!) for monthly,

deep cleaning.

To keep day-to-day dirt and grit off your floors, aim to sweep or vacuum weekly. When using a vacuum for regular cleanings, opt for a soft floor attachment or hardwood setting that disengages the beater bar (this is the bar that rotates when cleaning carpet.) By disengaging it on hardwood and avoiding a vacuum or attachment with hard bristles, you can avoid any scuffing or scratching of your floors.

If you have heavy furniture placed directly on your hardwood, be sure to use felt pads on the feet to avoid scratches, and replace them regularly. This also includes furniture that is moved frequently, such as dining room chairs.

Strive to do a deep clean monthly to ensure you pick up the dirt and grime that inevitably forms over time. A great hardwood flooring care set is LL Flooring's Bellawood Floor Care Maintenance Kit, which comes with a bottle of floor cleaner, a mop head and handle, washable wet mop microfiber pad, dry mop pad and a variety pack of felt pads.

This set is Greenguard Gold Certified, which means it's third-party tested for low chemical emissions and therefore safe to use at home. It's also urethane-safe and

won't leave a dull-streaky residue on your floors, so they'll look refreshed when you're done cleaning.

WHAT TO AVOID

Relative to most other flooring materials, solid hardwood is sensitive to moisture, whether that be due to wet shoes or just changes in humidity. Therefore, it's important to keep any amount of standing water off the planks.

That means ditch the traditional mop and bucket, which can leave behind water that could cause your floors to swell, crack or splinter.

Another critical thing to avoid is harsh cleaning solutions which include ingredients like chlorine bleach, ammonia, pine oil or undiluted vinegar. These can dull your floors by affecting the protective finish, causing lasting damage.

"The best thing about hardwood flooring is that it's a sustainable, living, organic material that takes on its own unique character throughout its lifetime," said Meska. "Each plank is unique and tells its own story, and with the proper care, they can serve as the design foundation of your home for generations."

(BPT)

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Upgrading a driveway and walkway is one way to update a home's exterior and restore its curb appeal.
STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

Signs a home exterior needs updating

Renovations are a great way for homeowners to reshape their homes. Some may aspire to renovate so their home is more reflective of their personal taste, while others may do so in an effort to make their homes better align with modern styles and sensibilities. Regardless of why a homeowner chooses to renovate, the need to do so is often evident to the naked eye,

especially when the time comes to update home exteriors.

Curb appeal is often discussed in regard to the effects it can have when selling a home. But curb appeal is equally important for homeowners who aren't putting their homes on the market.

A well-maintained, aesthetically appealing home is a source of pride, while a home with fading curb appeal can make homeowners feel a little sheepish. Homeowners who want their homes to maintain their curb appeal can look for signs that it's time to update their home exteriors.

CURLING SHINGLES

The roof may not be the first thing people think of when pondering curb appeal, but a damaged roof can contribute to problems that ultimately affect the exterior and interior of the home. Multiple curling shingles indicate it's time to replace the roof. The sight of curling shingles is not pretty, but the larger issue in such instances is the potential for costly water damage when water gets in through the affected shingles.

DATED ENTRY DOOR

Many home improvement experts insist they can determine when a home was built or most recently renovated simply by looking at the front door. Steel and glass

doors are popular in modern homes, so homeowners with front doors with ornate designs and oval glass inserts can likely benefit from an upgrade to their entryway. A modern front door can make a statement and real estate experts note how popular updated front doors are among buyers.

UNSIGHTLY LANDSCAPING

It's not only the physical components of the home that may suggest an update is necessary. Homeowners without a green thumb may have exterior landscaping that has seen better days. If a spring or summer day spent tending to your landscaping is not your ideal weekend pastime, then consider replacing unsightly landscaping with low-maintenance plants or hardscaping. These alternatives to more needy plants can create curb appeal without requiring any extra work for homeowners.

CRACKED DRIVEWAYS/WALKWAYS

If the driveway looks like a busy road at the end of snow plowing season, chances are that's adversely affecting the impression people have of your home. In addition, cracked walkways indicate a need for renovations, as these areas are front and center when welcoming guests.

Updating a home's exterior can restore curb appeal and help homeowners feel better about their properties

(METRO CREATIVE)

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STOCK PHOTO Homes & Design

Why it pays to hire contractors for home renovations

A sense of pride comes from a successful do-it-yourself home improvement project. However, quite often inexperience and time constraints lead homeowners to turn to professional contractors to make sure jobs get done correctly and on time. Allied Market Research reported in 2021 that the home improvement services market is predicted to reach \$585.3 billion by 2030. The following are some reasons why renovation-minded homeowners benefit from the services of professionals.

TOO MUCH

Tasks can be overwhelming: A home remodel is a large undertaking with many different steps. Contractors who have been around the block a time or two understand how to organize and manage time to get the job done. Plus, they're devoting all of their attention and time toward the remodel when on the job. This differs from when a do-it-yourselfer tries to work on a remodel in between other responsibilities.

NETWORK OF SUPPLIERS

A good general contractor will have a list of material suppliers he or she routinely uses. Often contractors become preferred sellers, which means they get a lower wholesale rate, and will often pass those savings on to the customer.

Licensed and bonded protection: Licensed and bonded contractors not only have the skills for the job, they have insurance protection behind them. Therefore, if an injury occurs or the job goes awry, the homeowner will be protected from liability.

A license means the contractor will have to uphold licensing standards, which could mean staying current on trade practices and skills.

EXPERTISE

Experienced contractors have done the work they have been hired to do many times, which means their skills are fine-tuned. Knowing the correct way to do a job results in fewer errors (and thus fewer repairs),

shorter time periods to get the work done, and potentially lower costs overall.

FREES UP TIME

Homeowners who hire out for remodels can utilize their time in other ways, such as on the job or spending time with family.

REDUCES STRESS

Putting the work in capable hands means homeowners do not have to educate themselves about how to do the task, purchase tools, prevent injuries, and/or deal with potentially negative outcomes. Certainly having extra people in the house can be challenging, but it may not equal the stress caused by tackling a job on one's own.

(METRO CREATIVE)

There are many advantages to hiring contractors to renovate a home instead of taking the DIY route.

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Signs you may need a new HVAC system

There's no place like home, especially when that home is a comfortable and safe haven. One of the ways residents find comfort in their homes is by maintaining the right indoor temperatures, which fluctuate along with the seasons. While there is much to be said about opening windows and doors to let Mother Nature do her thing, indoor comfort is often maintained with an HVAC system.

HVAC stands for heating, ventilation and air conditioning. It can include heat pumps, furnaces and air conditioning units. It is an automated system that works by adjusting a thermostat to regulate air temperature,

and sometimes humidity, in the home. According to Enviguard, a commercial contracting provider, HVAC systems also may be used to improve indoor air quality through filtration and oxygen replacement.

As with any mechanical device, an HVAC system has a life span that must be considered. Should any of the following conditions be present, it is likely time to consult with an HVAC technician to see if repairs or replacement of the entire system is warranted.

AGE

If the HVAC system is more than 10 years old, it could be time to begin budgeting for a new unit. Many modern, efficient systems may last 12 to 14 years with routine maintenance. But it's good to keep an HVAC system's age in mind so you can readily recognize when it might start to fail.

RUNNING TIMES

An efficient, properly working system will quickly heat or cool the home and then turn off. A system that is turning on repeatedly or having to run for awhile before the set temperature is reached could be nearing the end of its utility.

STRANGE NOISES

Groaning, banging or loud humming noises should be addressed. While these

noises may indicate that certain components need maintenance or replacement, they also could be symptoms of age and a system nearing failure.

FREQUENT REPAIR VISITS

Knowing the HVAC company's repair person by name is a sign that the system has required too much work in recent months. Repeated issues and repairs are probably signs that it's time to consider a system replacement.

HIGHER BILLS

Sticker shock when receiving electricity or gas bills likely mean the HVAC system isn't working efficiently and might need to be replaced.

POOR INDOOR AIR QUALITY

If the home is dusty or humid or even if allergies seem to have cropped up out of nowhere, this could indicate a poorly functioning HVAC system.

(METRO CREATIVE)

HVAC systems are vital to keeping indoor environments comfortable and safe. Such systems may exhibit certain signs that indicate they need to be replaced.

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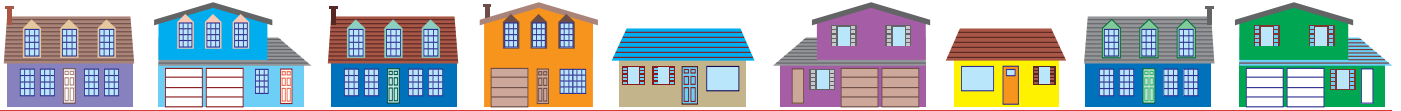
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home and property sales

Here is a listing of recent single-family home, condominium and vacant land sales in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties. The information is provided through the Multiple Listing Service.

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- 837 River Ridge Cir..... \$ 418,500
- 6617 Lorraine Cir..... \$ 415,000

Caledonia

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- 3051 95th St..... \$ 228,000
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Franksville

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- 3119 Conrad Dr..... \$ 158,000
- 3648 Green St..... \$ 180,000
- 1017 Montclair Dr..... \$ 170,000
- 736 Willmor St..... \$ 175,000
- 2521 Ridgewood Ave \$ 150,000
- 1517 Wedgewood Dr..... \$ 177,500
- 2200 Erie St \$ 180,000
- 701 Orchard St..... \$ 172,000
- 1436 Lincoln St \$ 179,900
- 4635 Youngblood Rd \$ 182,900
- 1500 Howard St..... \$ 178,000

- 314 Chicago St..... \$ 188,000
- 3815 Lasalle St \$ 179,000
- 5211 Maryland Ave \$ 186,000

CONDOS

Mount Pleasant

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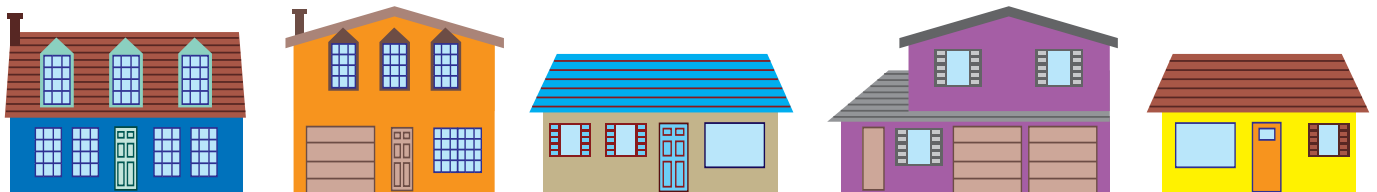
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- 6315 104th St \$ 340,500
- 10861 41st Ave \$ 320,000
- 1562 112th St \$ 393,300
- Silver Lake**
- 104 W Lake St \$ 313,000
- Kenosha**
- 808 16th Pl \$ 199,900
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- 4413 30th Ave \$ 200,000
- 5732 66th St \$ 218,000
- 7704 40th Ave \$ 215,000
- 7405 43rd Ave \$ 212,700
- 1518 16th St \$ 195,000
- 3602 18th Ave \$ 220,000
- 1514 22nd St \$ 215,000
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Yes, it's absolutely true. You can actually replace your old (and probably very inefficient) furnace and air conditioner as a package for at least \$1,876 less than you would have to pay at any other time. Let me explain. Every year, the months of January, February, March and April can "Kill" my business. I end up losing a ton of money during these "Killer" months and it can take me the remaining eight months to make up for them. And I'm looking for the same thing to happen this year.

My Problem Is Your Opportunity

I've decided to give up trying to make a profit during the "killer" months. If I can only minimize my losses during January, February, March and April I will come out ahead in the other eight months. Here's how this (admittedly daring) offer came about. Every year, the big manufacturers of air conditioners have to guess how many to build to meet the demand. Of course, they're never exactly right. So, they always have some inventory they must hold over until the next summer season. I went to one of my distributors and they allocated 66 premier air conditioners and furnaces. And, because of the quantity and time of year, I was able to buy them at drastically reduced, dirt cheap, out-of-season prices. They are brand new 2022 models. And they are NOT the seconds or "blems" or standard "builder" models. They are factory-fresh, premier air conditioners and furnaces and have a full factory warranty.

Here's How You Can Get A Furnace For Peanuts

By putting this furnace and air conditioner package together (then "Jaw-Boning" the distributor) and committing to a do-or-die purchase agreement of these systems, I was able to buy both the furnace and the air conditioner for less than anyone should have a right to pay! So, if you buy one of these normal new, premier air conditioners, I am "giving" you the furnace and all I ask for is the \$1,275 it costs to have your furnace installed.

Here's How

Just call me at 262-248-2103 anytime. We will come out and measure your home (and determine the availability of the proper size). Don't forget, I only have a limited amount of matched systems. When they are gone, this remarkable offer ends also. I will show you the real world price on the air conditioner that fits your home. Then, I will show you the substantial savings now. And it will include all labor and installation materials. Nothing is left out.

The Concept Is Simple Really

By letting you win big now, I will win at the end of the year. I'm betting that if I make you an offer that is "irresistible" (at least it should be if your furnace or air conditioner is over 10 years old) and I barely mark it up above the price I paid, I will accomplish two things:

1. I will cover my rent, utilities, insurance and taxes in the "killer" months.
2. I can pay my professional staff and technicians to work instead of paying them to sit at home.

If I can accomplish these two objectives, I will minimize my losses and the rest of the year, I can be a winner.

No Obligation

Even after I completely explain the installation, there is absolutely no obligation. If you decide you don't want to take advantage of the spectacular savings... that's okay. I will give you a surprise gift worth \$60 because you are kind enough to read this ad and give me a chance to solve my problem. I want you to think well of Master Services Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, even if you don't buy.

You Can Buy With NO Cash

You don't even have to pay me right away. I have set up a bank rate financing plan. Consider this. If you decide to make monthly investments instead of paying cash the entire amount of your payments might be more than offset by the savings on your utility bills. It's like "having your cake and eating it too".

Ironclad Guarantee

I'm so confident that you will save at least 25% on your cooling and heating bills (I'm projecting more like 35% +), that I will pay you Double The Difference for two years if you don't! I'll show you exactly how this works. There is no way you can lose. Your lower utility bills will help you save big. And I will even double your savings if you save less than 25%. If these premier systems were not among the best on the market, I couldn't afford to make such a promise.

Why This Offer Can't Last

You must act before April 15th. Here are two reasons why.

1. I only have a limited amount of pieces of equipment. When all of the air conditioners are sold and all the furnaces are "given" away, that's it. There are no more at this price.
2. If I have any of these systems that are left on April 15th (although I doubt I will), this offer still ends. Here's why. The only reason I am making this virtually no-profit (for me) offer is because of the "killer months". My business always picks up about May first. Since these furnaces cost me so little, I can sell them at last years prices next November and December and still come out ahead. Give me a call now at 248-2103 and I will set an appointment for your no-obligation survey.



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