

Your Possible Home

Building Meaningful, Enduring Family Bonds in the Age of AI


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Monthly Home Maintenance Checklist

Prevent breakdowns and overwhelm by handling small things on a regular schedule

Most household disasters aren't actually disasters. They're small maintenance items that got skipped for long enough to become big ones. The dishwasher that died because the filter never got cleaned. The smoke detector that chirped at 3 a.m. because the battery hadn't been changed in two years. The pantry that hid an open bag of flour for so long that nothing in the surrounding shelf is salvageable.

A monthly checklist isn't about being a more organized person. It's about catching the things that are easy to handle today and expensive or unpleasant to handle later. Run through this list once a month, ideally on the same day each month so it becomes a rhythm rather than a memory test. Some items will only take five minutes. A few will take longer. Most months you won't need to do every item, but the list keeps the full picture in front of you so nothing drifts.

Air, water, and safety

- Change the HVAC air filter — the single most-skipped item on any maintenance list and the one that costs the most over time
- Test the smoke detectors and replace any batteries that need it
- Test the carbon monoxide detectors
- Check the fire extinguisher pressure gauges in the kitchen and garage
- Run hot water through every faucet and shower briefly to prevent stagnation
- Check under sinks for slow leaks, soft cabinet bottoms, or damp smells
- Inspect the water heater area for moisture, rust, or anything that wasn't there last month
- Pour a cup of water into any floor drain (basement, laundry room, garage) to keep the trap from drying out

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Kitchen

- Clean out the fridge — wipe down shelves, check expiration dates, toss anything quietly going bad behind the condiments
- Pull out and clean under small countertop appliances (toaster, coffee maker, stand mixer)
- Run a cleaning cycle in the dishwasher with a dishwasher cleaner or a cup of vinegar
- Clean the dishwasher filter — most people don't know this exists, and it's the difference between a dishwasher that lasts five years and one that lasts fifteen
- Wipe down the inside of the microwave
- Run the garbage disposal with ice and citrus peels to clean and freshen it
- Check the range hood filter and clean or replace it as needed
- Wipe down the front and top of the stove, and pull it out once a quarter for the floor underneath
- Review the pantry — check what's expired, note what's running low, add anything missing to the next grocery list

Bathrooms

- Pour boiling water or a drain treatment down each bathroom drain to prevent slow buildup
- Wash bath mats and shower curtains or liners
- Check caulking around tubs, showers, and sinks for cracks or mildew
- Replace toothbrushes if it's been three months
- Restock under-sink supplies (toilet paper, soap, cleaning products) so no one is improvising at the wrong moment

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Laundry

- Clean the lint trap deeply, including the slot the trap slides into
- Vacuum or brush out the dryer vent opening
- Run a washing machine cleaning cycle (especially front-loaders, which build up mildew without it)
- Wipe the rubber gasket on the washing machine door

Living spaces and floors

- Vacuum the vents and intake covers throughout the house
- Wipe the baseboards, or at least one room's worth, on a rotating basis so the whole house gets covered every couple of months
- Vacuum under furniture that doesn't get moved during normal cleaning
- Spot-clean upholstery and rugs
- Dust ceiling fans, light fixtures, and the tops of door frames
- Check the batteries in remotes, thermostats, and any small electronics that have gone quiet

Outside the house

- Walk the perimeter of the home looking for anything new — cracks, peeling paint, damaged siding, missing roof shingles visible from the ground
- Check the gutters or schedule a cleaning if leaves have been falling
- Inspect outdoor faucets and hoses for leaks or damage
- Look at the dryer vent exit on the outside of the house and clear any lint buildup

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Check the garage door — listen for new sounds, watch the safety reverse work properly when something is in its path

Test outdoor lighting and replace bulbs that are out

Inspect window and door weatherstripping in seasons when it matters

Vehicles

Check tire pressure on every vehicle, including the spare

Look at tire tread and watch for uneven wear

Top off windshield washer fluid

Note any dashboard warning lights and address them before they become urgent

Confirm registration and inspection stickers are current — this is the kind of thing that gets noticed when you're already running late

Admin and finances

Review the upcoming month's calendar so school events, birthdays, appointments, and travel days don't sneak up on you

Scan the bank and credit card statements for charges that don't look right

Review subscriptions — cancel anything no one's used in the last three months

Check that bills on autopay actually went through

File or shred the paper that's been piling up on the counter

Back up phones, photos, or any files that would be painful to lose

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Seasonal — add as the calendar requires

- Reverse the direction of ceiling fans (clockwise in winter, counterclockwise in summer)
- Service or winterize the lawn equipment
- Check the sump pump before storm seasons
- Schedule HVAC servicing in spring and fall
- Drain and store outdoor hoses before the first freeze

The full list looks long the first time you read it. In practice, most months you'll do twenty minutes of quick checks and one or two larger items, and the house quietly stops surprising you. That's the whole goal — not a perfectly maintained home, but a home where the small things get caught early enough to stay small.