



Top autumn home maintenance tips

by Adam Smith

With Autumn upon us it's the perfect time to undertake maintenance on your home or rental property whilst it's still warm and in preparation for the winter weather ahead.

A few simple checks and changes can help save you time, money and avoid future stress by being prepared. It will also help keep you warm, dry and happy.

1. Clear your roof and gutters

Gutters have a pretty clear purpose – they're there to drain rain. But piled with leaves and debris, the rain has to go elsewhere and flows over the top of guttering, or carries the debris with it and clogs downpipes. If left unattended, this can cause penetrating damp, rotting fascias, corrosion and broken drains.

Instead of making a mad dash to clear a blockage in the middle of a downpour, get on the roof while it's safe and dry, and clear out all your guttering, downpipes and drains.

As a final step to stop mould and lichen from growing, you can mix one part bleach to four parts water and wash gutters out. If you collect rainwater from the roof for domestic use, then remember to disconnect the drainpipe before cleaning it. Rinse the entire system thoroughly with clean water before reattaching the downpipe. Also, take care when using water blasters or hoses as the high pressure can result in water penetrating your house.

2. Trim those branches

As well as filling your gutters with leaves, overhanging branches can do even more harm to your roof. During high winds they can scratch, gouge and even puncture roofing materials. Tree branches can break and cause damage to your roof or power lines too, so take a careful look around your property and see where hazardous branches or even dangerous trees may be.

When pruning branches, remember to stay safe and keep clear of any power lines. Depending on the scale of the tree, you may need to enlist professional help.

3. Check your windows

Whether you've got aluminium or wooden joinery, windows are an obvious place for moisture to creep in over winter.

Keep a close eye on window seals, is water and wind coming in through joinery, and address any problems quick-smart. A great tip is to run a strip of self-adhesive foam (cheap and available from hardware stores) around draughty windows – this instantly stops cold air from entering the home, just in time for those cooler winter winds.

Simple measures like this can save you a lot of money in the long run, and in power too. [Take a look at these smart joinery maintenance tips from Consumer NZ.](#)

4. Maintain your home heating

If you own a heat pump or a wood burner, now is the perfect time to call the experts to service them, beat the rush and just in time for winter

- Wood burner – Under your House Insurance policy there is likely to be a requirement for your fire to be checked and cleaned annually. Even if not, it is still a recommended seasonal check to have your chimney swept and the flue and vents inspected.
- Heat pump – Annual maintenance checks on your heat pump are important. Have you dirty air filters and vents cleaned in both your indoor and outdoor units to ensure your heat pump is working efficiently.

Hopefully staying on top of some of these minor maintenance tips will steer you clear of expensive problems over time and keep your home warm and cosy for those winter months ahead.