

Ten home repairs that will save you money

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Remodels are great, but can get pretty pricey. Not everyone has thousands to add value to their home - but what about those less glamorous repair projects on your to-do list? These simple and inexpensive maintenance items don't seem like they add to your home's value, but they're big money-savers in the long run.

1. Caulk

If you've lived in your house a few years, you probably noticed that the caulk along your sinks, countertops and bathtub is coming loose. These gaps may not seem like a big deal, but they can wreak havoc inside your walls. Moisture causes mold and even leaks - expensive repairs that can easily be prevented. A tube of kitchen and bath caulk costs just a few dollars, and you'll avoid expensive repairs.

2. Insulate

The quickest way to save money on your energy bill is to insulate, yet so many of us overlook this simple home improvement project for its benefits. Sure, your walls are insulated, but what about your basement, your attic, and your garage? Just in case the energy cost savings aren't enticing enough for you, check with the government - there are current credits that allow you to deduct this energy-saving expense from your taxes. (Find out what you can do to improve your chances of having a quick sale, in [Selling Your Home In A Down Market](#).)

3. Change Filters

When was the last time you changed your furnace's air filters? It's an oft-overlooked chore, but one that keep your furnace running efficiently, and improves the air quality inside your home. Change your filters at least every three months to keep your furnace working efficiently for years to come.

4. Install a Thermostat

Does your home have a programmable thermostat? If not, invest in one; it'll earn its money back in no time. By programming heating and cooling, you avoid paying to keep an empty house at a comfortable temperature. Manage the heat appropriately in winter to avoid burst water pipes; in summer, draw your curtains during the day to keep the house cool. Buy a programmable thermostat and you can save big on monthly bills.

5. Fix Leaks

That leaky faucet or runny toilet is draining your water bill, and in most cases it's a cheap and quick fix. Replace the washer on your faucet, and while you're at it, consider installing a faucet aerator if yours doesn't already have one. Faucet aerators reduce water flow from your faucet to save on your water bill; check your home improvement store for this inexpensive fix. (If you're just looking to get rich quick, you could end up in the poorhouse. Find out how, in [5 Mistakes That Make House Flipping A Flop](#).)

6. Install Dimmers

Dimmers aren't just for romance; they can save you big bucks on your energy bill. They're cheap and easy to install, so look for rooms that could use a little reduction in harsh lighting. While you're at it, replace your light bulbs with energy-efficient ones. They're big money savers.

7. Clean Carpets

Clean your carpet lately? With proper care, carpets can last a long time and look great, but everyone needs to clean them sometime. You don't need to hire an expensive service either - if you can vacuum, you can clean your carpets by yourself. Rent a carpet cleaner at your local supermarket or big-box store for a modest fee. Make sure you vacuum thoroughly before cleaning, and pick a dry day so your carpet dries quickly. With regular cleaning your carpet can last a long time, saving you big bucks on new flooring.

8. Clean Siding and Windows

Windows and siding get a beating in most climates. Wash your windows and siding with a simple hose and water first, and with a cleaning solution as needed; your home improvement store sells specialty products for just this kind of job. Rent a power washer for very dirty jobs. Keep an eye on cobwebs, wasp and bird nests to ensure your home's exterior stays in good shape. Touch up with paint as needed, and your house will look like new at little or no cost. (Some renovations will mean a bigger sale price on your home, while others will just cost you. Find out more, in [Will Your Home Remodel Pay Off?](#))

9. Fight Pests

Those spiders and ants at your foundation, that mouse nest in your crawl space? Take care of it - pests can destroy a home in a hurry. Hire an exterminator, or for small pests, combat with pesticides. Even if you don't think you have a problem, inspect every part of the interior and exterior of your home regularly to avoid small pest problems getting out hand.

10. Clean Ductwork

If your home is older, your ductwork likely has dust, grime, and other unwelcome residue inside. For big jobs, pay a professional; a simple cleaning can easily be done yourself. Simply remove the grates from your air vents, and clean the inside with your vacuum.

The Bottom Line

The best way to invest in your home is to take good care of what's already there. With these simple repair jobs, you'll even save money - with just a little elbow grease as investment.