

Home maintenance



Tips you can't afford to ignore

With homeownership comes home maintenance. And if there's one piece of advice we can give you, it's this: don't put off fixing the small things today because they'll become the big things tomorrow. Take care of the following five areas of your property and you'll have a happy, healthy home for years to come.

Expert advice:

Never ever clean your roof with a high-pressure hose - doing so can strip the surface resulting in a shorter life expectancy, and cause cracks.

1 ROOF

A poorly maintained roof can seriously impact the structure of your home, even damaging its foundations over time. To keep your roof in good shape, make sure that you regularly:

- Check for broken, damaged or missing tiles, IBR sheeting or thatch and fix any problem areas.
- Clear your gutters and downpipes of leaves and debris.
- Remove any moss build-up.

2 TREES

Make sure that the trees growing near your house are healthy that they don't grow over your gutters or roof – you don't want a branch breaking and causing damage. It's also worth getting an arborist to check that there aren't any roots damaging the structure of your home, and keeping an eye on roots growing in your drains, as neither is covered by your homeowners cover.

3 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

Make it a habit to inspect the electrics around your home regularly.

- Check that your plugs are working.
- Look for and replace frayed or damaged wires.
- Call a qualified electrician immediately if there's a fault – don't try to fix electrical problems yourself!

4 EXTERIOR CRACKS

Exterior cracks can allow water to seep into your home, causing damp which can be very costly to repair. Damp is also a big no-no for potential buyers and can seriously affect your ability to sell your property down the line.

5 PLUMBING

Keep a close eye on your plumbing fixtures to avoid costly problems later on.

- Check the faucets in your basins, sinks, bath and shower for leaks and, if necessary, call in a plumber.
- Replace the silicone seals around your bath and basins as needed to avoid water seeping into your walls and causing damage.
- Regularly clear out all drains with a plunger to prevent serious blockages.

6 FIREPLACES

Lighting a fire is a wonderful way to make your home feel warm and cosy during the winter months. But having a fireplace does mean some maintenance.

- Clean your chimney (or call in the experts to do it) to remove any creosote build-up which can lead to a fire in your chimney.
- Inspect the metal flashing between your roof and chimney to make sure that no water can seep into your roof.