

## 5 Home Maintenance Chores to Tackle This Fall



This fall, get a jump-start on home maintenance chores that will keep your home clean and comfortable.

Here are five things you can do, inside and out. They won't take much time, but they'll have a big impact on your home's appearance and upkeep.



## 1. Rake the Lawn — Often

Fallen leaves break down and provide nutrients to trees; it's all part of Mother Nature's plan. But too many of them prevent competing plants from getting their nutrients.

Before those leaves wreak havoc on your backyard — and make a big mess — take a high-quality rake, like the [Ames 26 in. Dual Tine Poly Leaf Rake Combo](#), to them.

If that seems like an ordeal, here's an easy trick that will shave time off this task.

Grab a 4-by-8-foot tarp and fold it in half. Then roll it up and staple wooden dowels on the ends. Then lay the tarp in front of your pile of leaves and rake everything on it.

You'll [rake leaves in record time](#), and bagging them is easy because of those dowels. They serve as handles and prevent the tarp from flopping. So, just grab both ends of the tarp and dump the leaves in the garbage can!

Remember: The more often you rake, the less of a mess your yard becomes, and the easier it is to maintain.



## 2. Plant Some Shrubs

While you're in the yard, focus on your trees and flower beds. This fall, it's out with the old and in with the new! That means [clearing your garden](#) and planting some seeds for spring.

First, remove any dead limbs from trees and shrubs. Then, head to The Home Depot's [Lawn and Garden Center](#) and ask for recommendations on shrubs that will thrive in your area.

Then, plant those shrubs — the roots can settle in and become established before going dormant for the winter.

Dig holes three times wider than the plants and at least as deep. In addition, build a compacted mound of dirt in the middle of the hole. This gives the plant a firm foundation while allowing room for roots to grow.

Next, place your shrubs in the holes at even width, or slightly above ground level, with the full sides facing out. Finally, add a shovel full of soil conditioner to the dirt when filling in the hole.



### **3. Seal Your Home's Envelope**

With your yard in good shape, turn your attention toward your home's exterior, which I like to call its 'envelope.' That's because it keeps outdoor elements — like air, rain and snow — outside.

Extreme temperature changes cause thermal expansion and contraction of building materials. Shifting soil and foundation settling also leave cracks and gaps.

This is why it's important to regularly inspect your home for problems and seal that envelope! Check around windows, doors and trim for separations and apply a high-quality sealant rated for outdoor use. You can find a lot of options at The Home Depot!

Just this simple change can make your home more energy-efficient. On top of that, it can prevent unwanted moisture inside, along with water damage, mold and mildew.



## 4. Replace the HVAC Filters

Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system will get plenty of use as the weather cools down, so make sure it can handle that extra work.

Replacing your HVAC's filters before extreme temperature swings is a good idea. In fact, a rule of thumb is to change the filters every 90 days.

That's easier than ever, because some filters have apps that notify you to change them. Of course, you can always grab a pen, write the installation date on the filter itself and make a note to replace it.

And don't settle for a cheap grocery store filter. Choosing a high-quality air filter, like [Honeywell's Elite Allergen Pleated FPR 10 Air Filter](#) will remove odors, pollen, pet dander, mold and virus carriers.

You may spend a little more, but the health benefits will be well worth it!



## 5. Caulk the Bathtub

How often do you enter your shower and notice gaps between the tile and bathtub?

Hey, life gets busy, and it's easy to forget — or avoid — caulking inside your home, but doing so couldn't be more important!

Sealing the joint around your tub prevents water from seeping behind the tile, which would cause the wood framing to mold or rot. Plus, a properly caulked bathtub looks nice when holiday guests come to visit.

First, score the old caulking with a utility knife. Next, use a putty knife or scraper to remove it, clean the joint well and dry the area with a hair dryer.

Once the joint is dry, seal the gap with [100% silicone caulk](#) and, finally, dip your finger into mineral spirits and run it along the bead of caulk to smooth it out.

These are just some of the home maintenance chores you can tackle this fall. Check out the [Four Seasons of Home Ownership Fall Checklist](#) for more tips!

*Danny Lipford hosts "Today's Homeowner," a nationally syndicated television and radio show.*

