

Home Improvement and Maintenance that Pays



Your home is likely the biggest investment of your life. Here are some tips for protecting your investment and creating a safe, enjoyable home.

Preventive maintenance includes routine checks and repairs that improve your home's appearance and functioning as well as prevent more expensive damage from occurring. These include:

- ▶ To protect against leaks and insect damage, inspect your home's roof, basement, and outside walls
- ▶ Inspect doors and windows for unusual wear and tear. Repair and replace caulk, weather-stripping, glazing, window and door seals as needed.
- ▶ Inspect insulation and replace any wet or damaged pieces.
- ▶ Clean debris from gutters and downspouts.
- ▶ Examine carpets and flooring. Treat minor mold growths quickly with a bleach and water solution.

- ▶ Have your furnace, air conditioner and hot water heater inspected, upgrading them as needed to improve energy efficiency. Replace air filters regularly.
- ▶ Thoroughly clean lint and debris that has built up in dryer ducts and behind lint screens.

Home repairs and replacements include fixing or replacing appliances, fixtures or systems in your house as they wear out through normal use.

- ▶ Repair or replace an inefficient furnace, air conditioner or water heater to save energy and money.
- ▶ Repair and replace leaking faucets and plumbing.
- ▶ Routinely replace smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries.

Home improvements, such as adding a deck or bathroom, can make your house more livable and add to its value. The House and Home Web site at www.msn.com estimates the following pay-backs for home improvements:



Projects	Cost	Average Payback
Add a new heating or air conditioning system	\$2,000 to 4,500	100% for heating; 75% for air conditioning
Minor kitchen remodeling	\$2,000 to 8,500	94 – 102%
Major kitchen remodeling	\$9,000 to 25,000	90%
Add bathroom	\$5,000 to 12,000	92%
Add a family room	\$30,000	86%
Remodel bathroom	\$8,500	77%
Add a fireplace	\$1,500 to 3,000	75%
Build a deck	\$6,000	73%
Replace windows	\$6,000	68-74%
Build a pool	\$10,000 and up	44%
Install or upgrade landscaping	\$1,500 to 15,000	30 to 60%
Finish basement	\$3,000 to 7,000	15%

