

# Hints For Homeowners

## Tips To Keep Your Home In Shape

(NAPSA)—Every year, Americans make resolutions to get in shape, save money and get organized. While exercise can help shed pounds and a list can keep you organized, a renewed commitment to the overall fitness of your home is an essential key to saving money and reducing stress.

Home improvement expert and TV host Amy Matthews shares her top five tips on how routine home maintenance checks can help homeowners avoid home repair emergencies and unexpected costs.

**1) Safety Equipment:** Matthews recommends homeowners confirm that all smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers are in good working order. This simple step can ensure your home is protected from the risk of fire and your family is safe from carbon monoxide. Be certain to replace batteries in appropriate devices as needed, or at least twice each year.

**2) Furnace Filters:** Remember to clean or replace filters every one to three months, or as needed. When installing new filters, do so correctly, as this is a common mistake. Homeowners should also check and clean the dryer vent, air conditioner vents, stove hood and room fans.

**3) Heating and Cooling Systems:** Heating and cooling systems can be costly to repair. To ensure the proper function of your heating and cooling systems, have them checked by a licensed HVAC professional annually to prevent future emergency repairs. HomeAdvisor's patented ProFinder technology connects homeowners with qualified and available local service professionals. Having a qualified service professional check your system is a great way to prevent costly unexpected repairs in the future.

**4) Roof:** Matthews recommends homeowners who live in regions that receive heavy rain, hail or snow be on the lookout for water damage after these storms. Matthews does not advise that homeowners go up



**Proper maintenance can mean fewer breakdowns and emergencies for your home.**

and inspect the roof themselves but rather call a professional if they notice damage or leaking. Ideally, homeowners should have their roofs inspected every one to two years on average.

**5) Hot Water Heater:** Hot water heaters are becoming more innovative and advanced, but if you are not ready to upgrade your water heater to a more efficient piece of equipment, you can still get the best use out of your current device. A simple tip is to gently touch your hot water heater to determine if it feels warm. If so, wrap an insulated blanket around the tank so that it improves the function of your heater.

In addition to these tips, HomeAdvisor and Amy Matthews have teamed up to develop the HomeAdvisor Home Report Card, a free, online quiz that homeowners can take on the HomeAdvisor website to assess the shape of their home and learn simple steps to improve their home's health.

### Where to Learn More

You can find more information about home improvement, maintenance and repair projects, including project cost guides, emergency support and prescreened professionals, at [www.homeadvisor.com](http://www.homeadvisor.com).