

The best way to get into the fall spirit while simultaneously preparing for colder weather and the holiday season is to do a bit of fall cleaning. Spring cleaning might be more popular, but fall cleaning is crucial as the temperatures drop and you begin to spend more time inside. Here are some ways you can organize and prepare your home for autumn.

1. Clean the Rain Gutters

This might not be your favorite activity, but it's a crucial step in winterizing your home. If you don't properly clean your gutters, water and snow won't be able to flow freely from your rooftop. If snow or ice builds up in the winter, you might notice a development of ice dams, which can damage your roof. Wait until the leaves on the trees surrounding your house have fallen, then climb on a ladder and clear all leaves, branches, and debris from the rain gutters. Don't hesitate to hire someone if you don't feel confident on a ladder.

2. Declutter Your Pantry

Organize your spices and dry ingredients, like brown sugar and flour, and dispose of any that are out of date. The best way to figure out if spices are starting to go bad is if they start to lose their fragrances. Dry ingredients, like flour or sugar, might show you that they are past their prime through their textures if they are too clumpy or too coarse. If you have any neglected snack foods that might be stale, throw them out as well.

3. Clean Out Your Fridge

Nothing creates unnecessary clutter in your refrigerator quite like expired fruits and vegetables. Perform a clean sweep of your refrigerator, disposing of foods that are past their prime. Clear out the foods you plan on keeping, then clean your fridge drawers and shelves of any spills. Then put the food back in, placing foods that typically go bad in crisper drawers or in the front, so you can use or dispose of them instead of leaving them neglected in the back. If you detest the dreaded fridge smell, buy some baking soda and leave the package open in the back of one of the shelves. The powder absorbs some of the unpleasant smells, leaving your refrigerator smelling fresh and clean.

4. Store the Patio Furniture

Put your outdoor furniture in your garage, basement or well-insulated shed to make sure it doesn't get damaged from unruly weather conditions. If you have outdoor potted plants, you'll also want to move them inside once the temperature drops below fifty degrees.

5. Organize Your Closet

Get your fall and winter clothing out of storage and move them to the front of your closet. You can put your summer clothes in storage or simply move them to the back of your closet. If you want to go even further, you might decide to purge some items that don't fit anymore or that you haven't worn in a long time. Box up the clothes you no longer need and bring them to a nearby donation center. If you can't use them, it's safe to guarantee someone else will appreciate them.

6. Sweep the Chimney

As the temperature drops, you'll want to make use of your fireplace. Hire a professional chimney sweep to inspect and clean your chimney of any built-up chemicals or nests that animals may have placed inside your chimney. Neglecting these can result in a dangerous house fire.

7. Clean Your Oven

Fall is the perfect time for baking pies or scones, or for cooking a roast dinner. You might make regular use of your oven once the temperature drops. If you don't have a self-cleaning oven, you'll need to take care of it yourself. First, remove oven racks, hand-washing and hand-drying them before placing them back inside. As for the top, sides and bottom of your oven, you will need to use an oven-cleaning solution to clean any hardened or burnt food. You can clean the interior and exterior of the oven door with a damp washcloth, but try your best not to wet the gasket.

8. Dust Shelves, Surfaces, and Wainscoting

As you spend more time inside, you risk exposing yourself to more dust particles in an unclean home. Especially if you or the other members of your household have dust allergies, you'll want to stay vigilant in preventing the accumulation of dust along the surfaces in your home. Some people neglect cleaning their walls. However, walls with wainscoting allow a significant amount of dust to build up. Use a damp cloth to wipe down wood wall detailing without damaging the paint.

9. Wash and Replace Bedding

If you have warmer comforters or throw blankets that you like to take out for the colder months, switch out your summer bedding and put it in storage. If your warmer blankets feel dusty or musty, you might want to run them through the laundry to keep them fresh. Even if you use the same comforters all year round, throw your bedding in the wash. With the rest of your home clean, it will feel great to get into a clean bed at night.

Fall is the perfect time to get your home ready for long hours spent inside. If you start feeling restless, decorate your home with some beautiful flowers or add some green plants for vibrancy and cleaner air.