

# Eight Tips on How to Prep Your Home for Fall

Written by Stacia Affelt

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Before the weather starts to cool down and the guests start arriving for the holiday season, Arizona homeowners should check their lists and check them twice — their housework lists that is. Co-founder of HomeZada, Elizabeth Dodson, offers some advice on prepping your house this fall and winter, as well as some tips that homeowners might not think to check on.

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**1. Change Your Air Filter.** With the winter months quickly approaching, heating systems will need to be turned on again. Before doing so, however, Dodson recommends changing your air filter. This ensures that you won't have bad or unclear air flowing through your home when you eventually turn on the heat, she says.

**2. Look at the Gutters.** Dodson says this is also a good time to look at your gutters once again to make sure nothing is broken and that your spouts are clean and unclogged. This will prevent any unwanted water leaks into your walls or yard this fall.

**3. Check Roofs and Doors.** While the weather is still warm, you should also pull out the ladder and head up to the roof to check for any loose, broken or fallen shingles. Do the same with door seals. Doing this, Dodson says, will keep mold from growing if too much moisture gets inside your house during the cooler months.

**4. Flush the Hot Water Heater.** Dodson suggests flushing out your water heater, emptying it, and rinsing it at least once a year. This time of year is the perfect time to do so. That way, when you turn it back on "you'll have great hot water, and clean hot water," Dodson says. "You won't have a lot of debris and sediment in your hot water tank."

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**5. Observe the Grading.** One thing homeowners might not think to do is check the grading around the house. "Your grading should be so slight that it actually moves any water or anything away from your home," Dodson says. If you don't check the grading, you might cause damage and rotting to your home. It's especially important to do if you get a lot of precipitation, she says, as it can cause mold that will cause further problems.

**6. Clean Your Windows.** Cleaning your house windows will not only make them sparkle for your holiday guests, but will also give you a chance to check for broken seals or screens. Broken seals can create issues with regulating the temperature inside your home.

**7. Trim the Bushes.** Trimming the trees and bushes around your home is a good idea to keep them from rubbing up against your house. "Your stucco can get warped if trees are rubbing against the walls," Dodson says. As an added plus, it will also make your yard look pretty.

**8. Fix the Little Things.** We've all heard of "spring cleaning," but fall is another perfect time to fix up your home as it is a transition season. The last important thing to do when prepping your home for the season is to complete the smaller maintenance tasks around the house, such as

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broken door handles, a squeaky floor or a leaky faucet. You'll not only feel great about checking these things off your list, but this will also ensure that your home is intact for any holiday guests that might be staying over. "The one thing that can happen is something that you know is broken but you work around it, your guests don't know that and they actually may break it even more if they're not familiar with it," Dodson says.

It's easy to forget about these things and put them on the back burner during the holidays, but you will feel better and your home will look better after it is prepped, cleaned and trimmed.