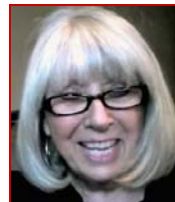


*Some
important
Things To
Know...*

**When you buy your first
Single family
home—or townhome**



Lori Blackwell
Real Estate
lori@loriblackwell.com



1

You may have lived in a high rise, and the closest you came to worrying about heating or cooling, was changing the thermostat.

Or you may have purchased a new single family home and acknowledged there were maintenance issues that had to be addressed—but in due time.

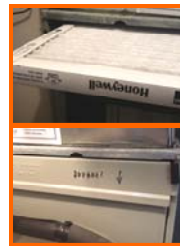
Or you may have purchased a new townhome governed by an association, and incorrectly assumed that the majority of external and internal maintenance was an association responsibility—covered by your monthly assessment.

Your agent, the listing agent and the seller, may not have identified all of the care and maintenance required. And while the inspector checked to make certain everything was working, he may not necessarily have provided you with a blueprint or time schedule for basic maintenance.

Here are 10 basic maintenance tips and a chart to help you remember.



Furnace and HVAC: Mark a calendar to change filters every 1 to 3 months depending on the filters you use and your home's environment. They improve air quality and the way your furnace/HVAC system operates. If you have pets, or smoke, you may have to change filters more frequently. So, it's smart to check them every month. As a filter collects debris from the air, it begins to clog and makes it harder for the blower to send air through it. When blowers work harder, your energy bills climb, your home takes longer to heat or cool, and you risk blower motor burnout.



To change filters: First, locate the filter slot, open and remove the old filter and replace with a new one—same size. Check online for your furnace make/model if you are unable to locate the filter slot, or the size of the filter.

2



Humidifying system: Check the filter as well. It should be replaced annually, but consult the owner manual for model specifics and for the removal and cleaning of the filter assembly. No manual? Google your humidifier brand—it'll be online.

Also, watch the thermostat and adjust it to accommodate the outside temperature—keeping it too high in severe cold weather, can contribute to ice on the windows and possible damage to window frames and walls, and possibly the development of mold.

3 The Fireplace:



Plan a cleanup at least once each year. Creosote can buildup can be a fire starter. It's sticky like tar and highly flammable.

Cleaning also helps remove critters who want to settle in the chimney. Chimney sweepers can also check to make certain the chimney cap is secure and hasn't been damaged by any severe weather

4 Mice



If you don't have a cat, get a few mousetraps and stick them in closets. Mice love to nest indoors when it gets cold. They can sneak through an opened door, or enter your home along the pipes on outside walls. Stuff steel wool in the gaps around pipes to prevent unwelcome visitors. And don't forget under the kitchen sink.

5 Heating vents



Make a point to have heating vents cleaned—floor vents collect dirt, carpet lint, and more.



Ceiling vents in a kitchen, can be a harbor for grease, allergens, and dirt. And dirty vents add to inefficient heating and higher heating costs.

6 Dryer vent



Don't forget to have it cleaned as well—a lint filled vent has been the source of many, many fires. And if your dirty dryer vent, vents to the attic and not outdoors, it could also

contribute to the growth of mold. Remember, when a dryer is attached to a flexible, plastic/wire hose for venting, it could trap lint. Replacing with a metal duct style venting is safer. Check with your appliance repairman.

7 The Water Heater:



Make certain that it sits in a tray—in the event of a leak, water won't leak everywhere. You may want to have a plumber flush out the water heater to remove any minerals or dirt that settle at the bottom of the heater. This sediment in the water can eventually rust out the bottom of the heater. You should also ask the plumber if he thinks the heater anode needs replacing.

8 The Outdoor Spigot:



Turning it off inside is not enough. The water in the pipe could freeze and cause the pipe to burst inside your home. First, locate the turn off valve in your basement,

that is if you have a basement. If not, check out a utility/furnace closet on the first floor. You'll probably find a couple of turn off valves—so you'll have to experiment or ask a neighbor. Once the *indoor* valve is turned off, turn on the *outdoor* spigot and drain any water in the pipe. When the water stops flowing, turn the spigot off. When the weather warms, turn it back on, inside.

9 The Water Softener:



Salt it and forget it?. No way. It's always smart to check if it's working. If your drinking glasses have a cloudy appearance, or if there is a crusty white residue clinging to everything water touches, the water softener is not doing its job. It may need salt, minimal repair or, you may need

a new one. A simple kit at the hardware store can be used to check the hardness of the water. Roughly 85% of homes have different levels of hard water—water with dissolved rock and chemicals in it, like iron from the lake or wells that provide your water. If you don't soften the water it can leave a residue that can shorten the life of appliances or equipment that utilize water; it can leave your skin dry and itchy; it can mar faucets and leave discolored stains in toilet bowls. And a lot more. For some great information on water softener maintenance, check out this video by a master plumber:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb1j-JVpNVk

10 Snow Melters

Keep some bags handy in the winter—but remember, snow melters or salt might not do much good when the temperature drops extremely low. Sand may be your solution.



Lori Blackwell
Real Estate
312-560-5538

Tech savvy representation
for buyers and sellers
featuring *Video Marketing*
Barrington, IL and Chicago's Near North



	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Furnace Change Filter 30-90 days												
Humidifying System Filter Change annually												
Fireplace Annual checkup										CHECK UP		
Mice Set traps									SET TRAPS			
Heating Vents												
Dryer Vent												
Water Heater												
Outdoor Spigot										CLOSE →		
Water Softener Add salt												
Snow Melters											BUY	

© Copyright 2015 LBlackwell

Plumber: _____ Phone _____

Heating/AC _____ Phone _____

Fireplace Sweep _____ Phone _____

Vent Cleaning Service _____ Phone _____

Real Estate in Lake Barrington & Chicago's Gold Coast,  Lori Blackwell Managing Broker _____ 312.560.5538

