

your home

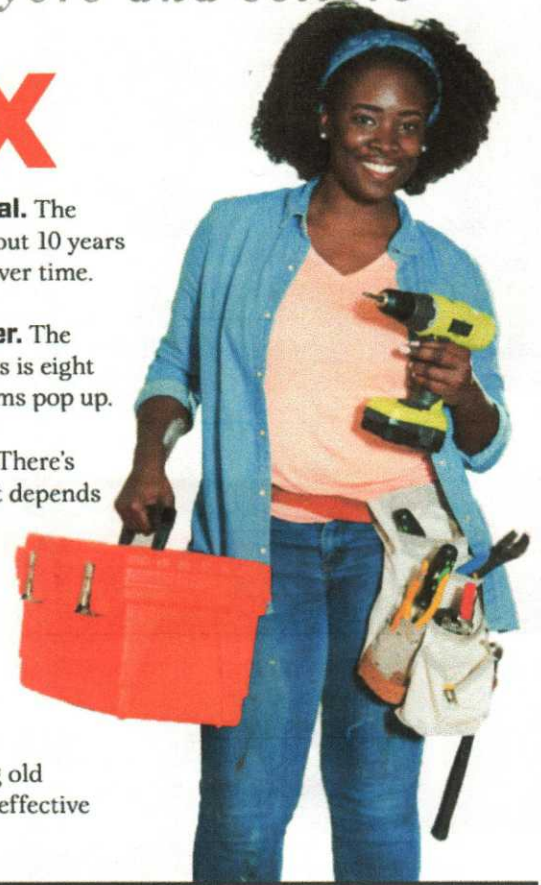
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Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

THE 10-YEAR **fix**

Once your home hits the 10-year mark, it's probably time for some home maintenance. Here are nine updates your home will benefit from the most, according to Zillow.

- ➔ **Get new carpet.** Replace your carpet if rips, tears, stains and odors remain, even after a good cleaning.
- ➔ **Replace the hot water tank.** A water heater may not show signs before it leaks or fails, but if it's been around for 10 years or more, it should be replaced.
- ➔ **Update ceiling fans.** If the fan's light bulbs seem to burn out more quickly than usual, it's time for a new one.
- ➔ **Buy a new dishwasher.** You'll likely get a more energy-efficient model that'll pay for itself over time.
- ➔ **Replace the garbage disposal.** The average garbage disposal lasts about 10 years because the blades become dull over time.
- ➔ **Replace the washer and dryer.** The average lifespan of both appliances is eight years. Replace them before problems pop up.
- ➔ **Repaint inside and outside.** There's no rule about when to repaint—it depends on where you live, humidity and other factors. But if it's been 10 years, it's time to repaint.
- ➔ **Re-caulk the tub, shower and sinks.** It's a simple update that you can easily do yourself.
- ➔ **Re-glaze windows.** Re-glazing old windows is easier and more cost-effective than replacing them.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY ON MOLD

Mold removal can be tricky—and expensive if it requires a specialist. HGTV offers some advice about the cost of mold remediation for your home, and what steps to take.



The good news: If the area of infestation is small, you can typically take care of it yourself. A small investment in cleaning supplies is all it will cost.

First, clean up the water and eliminate the source of excess moisture. It's important to remove mold with a biocide and disinfectant, rather than with bleach. Be sure to open windows and wear gloves, eye protection and a facemask. Then allow the affected area to dry.



The bad news: Remediation cost for larger areas of mold will be greater, but it will ensure further damage is not done. The cost of inspection by a specialist averages \$500 to \$6,000—

depending on the entire scope of the infestation.

Remember to consider some type of protection from mold when purchasing insurance. If a problem should arise, your insurance will help offset at least part of the cost of mold removal.



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HOME CARE myths



Realtor.com® shares 8 top home care myths that are a waste of your time and money.

1 Stone countertops are indestructible

In fact, stone countertops are easy to stain and scratch. Plus, regular household cleaners and mildly acidic substances, like soda, coffee and wine, can dull stone surfaces over time.

2 Your smoke detector's test button is foolproof

The test button tells you the sound is working, not if the sensor that detects smoke is working. Use real smoke to check it. Light a match, blow it out and hold it near the detector. If the alarm goes off, it's working.

4 A lemon is a great way to clean a disposal

A lemon's acidic juice will corrode the metal parts of your disposal, and coffee grounds will accumulate in pipes and clog them. The best natural cleaner is baking soda, which will clean the blades but won't damage the metal.

5 Mow your lawn short and you'll mow less often

It's important to leave 1 to 3 inches of grass above the roots to keep your lawn lush. Removing more will leave your grass too weak to withstand weeds and pests. It also exposes the roots to the sun, causing the lawn to dry out.

3 Gutter guards are maintenance-free

Gutter guards may keep out leaves, but small debris can still get through. It's best to clean them every two years—or once a year if your home is surrounded by trees—to prevent damage to your gutters.

6 CFLs cost too much, and are dangerous

Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) aren't as expensive as you think and don't contain enough mercury to cause any harm. Plus, CFLs last an average of five years.

7 Trendy kitchen re-do will increase my home's value

Home trends come and go quickly. Instead of remodeling in the latest look, try repainting with trendy colors. If you do opt for a full remodel, choose elements with a timeless style, like wood floors and subway tile.

8 A contractor recommendation from a friend is good enough

Look for a contractor as if it were a job interview. Before hiring, talk to a couple of sources, check the contractor's online reviews and ask a local building inspector which contractors meet code on the properties they inspect.

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