



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers



Preparing Your Patio or Deck for Outdoor Season

As warmer weather returns, your patio or deck becomes one of the most inviting spaces around your home. Before outdoor season begins, a little preparation can make the space safer, cleaner and ready for relaxing or entertaining.

Winter weather often leaves behind dirt, mildew and loose hardware. Routine cleaning and inspection help protect wood surfaces and extend the life of your deck. Regular maintenance also prevents small problems from becoming costly repairs later.

A quick outdoor refresh checklist:

- ▶ Sweep away leaves, dirt and debris
- ▶ Wash surfaces with a deck-safe cleaner
- ▶ Check for loose boards, nails or screws
- ▶ Inspect railings and stairs for stability
- ▶ Clean outdoor furniture and cushions
- ▶ Add fresh plants or container gardens

If you have a wood deck, spring is also a good time to check whether it needs resealing or staining. Protective coatings help prevent moisture damage and sun fading.

Spending an hour or two preparing your outdoor area can make a big difference. With a clean, safe and comfortable patio or deck, you'll be ready for outdoor meals, morning coffee or evening gatherings all season long.

Installing Motion Sensor Lighting Around Your Home

Motion sensor lighting is one of the easiest upgrades you can make to improve home safety and energy efficiency. These fixtures automatically turn on when movement is detected, helping illuminate entryways, pathways and darker areas around your home.

Because the lights activate only when needed, they can reduce electricity use compared to lights left on overnight. The U.S. Department of Energy notes that LED outdoor lighting paired with motion sensors can improve efficiency while maintaining visibility and security.

Steps for installing motion lighting effectively:

- ❶ Choose strategic locations. Install lights near doors, garages and walkways.
- ❷ Select LED fixtures. LED bulbs last longer and use less electricity.
- ❸ Mount at the proper height. Most motion sensors work best 6 to 10 feet above ground.
- ❹ Adjust the detection range. Aim sensors toward entry areas rather than busy streets.
- ❺ Test the settings. Walk through the detection zone to ensure lights activate properly.

Motion lighting improves nighttime visibility and helps deter unwanted activity around your home. With thoughtful placement, this simple upgrade adds convenience, safety and efficiency.



Inspecting Your Roof After Winter Weather

Winter storms can quietly damage roofing materials. Snow buildup, ice and fluctuating temperatures often loosen shingles or create small cracks that lead to leaks if ignored. A spring inspection helps catch problems before they grow.

Start by visually checking your roof from the ground. Look for missing, curled or cracked shingles, especially along edges and ridges. These are common signs that winter winds or ice have lifted the roofing materials.

Next, inspect flashing around chimneys, skylights and roof vents. These metal seals are designed to keep water out, but they can loosen over time. Also check gutters for shingle granules, which may indicate that shingles are wearing down.

Tip: If you notice several damaged shingles or signs of water inside your home, contact a roofing professional for a closer inspection.

Regular inspections can extend the life of your roof and help prevent costly repairs. Spending a few minutes checking your roof after winter storms can save significant time, stress and expense later in the year.

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