

A Winter 'tune-up' for your home

Winter is a time of year when many of us resolve to get ourselves in trim, whether it's joining the gym or a dance class, or perhaps buying some exercise machinery for our home. We devote a lot of attention to our cars too, putting on the snow tires, changing to winter anti-freeze, loading a bag of salt in the trunk. But what about a 'tune-up' to get your home operating at top efficiency? While we're snuggled in at home during the winter months, it's a good time to make a few home 'tune ups' that could save you money while helping your home to run more efficiently.

A good place to start is by making your home more energy efficient. There are many ways to do it for very little expense. For a modest investment in the \$50 range, a thermostat timer will allow you to pre-set your thermostat to turn itself down a few degrees after you go to bed each night, and turn the temperature back up before you get out of bed each morning. If you're normally out of the house all day, you can achieve even greater savings by repeating the process when you leave your home each day.

Another simple and inexpensive way to improve energy efficiency is to wrap your water heater in insulating material to reduce heat loss. This small task can deliver savings that will really add up over the course of a year. You can also reduce heat loss by installing small pre-cut insulating pads under the cover plate of wall plugs and switches on the walls around your home's perimeter. Dimmer switches, and the energy-efficient light bulbs will also reduce energy and save you money too.

Your home 'tune-up' should include a check of the fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home. You should be sure that you have a *working* smoke alarm (and that means testing the batteries at least twice a year). installed on every floor of your house. Also, clean the air filters on your furnace. You should also consider having a furnace inspection to ensure its running safely and performing at top efficiency. Again, your energy savings may even cover the cost of the inspection, and the peace of mind it delivers is priceless.

Want to know more about keeping your home running at optimum levels, and preserving its future resale value? Contact your local **Coldwell Banker®** sales representative, and let's talk real estate.

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