

Top Tips for National Home Improvement Month

Written by Kathy Ziprik

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AMBLER, PA – Springtime has arrived and it's time to dust off the "to do" list. But, how does a homeowner decide which projects should take priority? According to Mark Clement, host of MyFixItUpLife home improvement radio show, start by selecting those projects that are the most important for enhancing the functionality of the home.

"National Home Improvement Month in May is the ideal time to shine the spotlight on annual home projects that should never be overlooked," says Clement, a professional contractor in Pennsylvania. "Sure it's great to work outside in the garden this time of year, but that task should take second place behind evaluating and fixing major components of the house.

"A home's curb appeal is important, but working on the structural aspects of the home should always take priority. For example, every year homeowners should be evaluating the condition of their roof, siding, windows, gutters and other exterior products that they rely on daily to keep their family safe and secure."

Clement, who is currently renovating his own 100-year-old home, understands that all products in and on the house will eventually need to be replaced. "We just replaced the original wood door on our home with a fiberglass door," says Clement. "That old door should have been removed a decade ago because it lost its functionality and was an energy drain on our home. The new Therma-Tru fiberglass door is energy-efficient, stylish and helps secure our home."

According to Clement, there is a "must do" list of five items that homeowners should review every year during National Home Improvement Month. "May is the ideal time weatherwise to do

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these checkups and replacement work for the home,” says Clement. “It makes sense economically to make any needed changes to the roof, windows or doors when such work will have the least impact on energy bills.”

The list recommended by Clement includes:

Item #1 – Check the roof. Using either a ladder or binoculars from across the street, look for problem areas, such as missing or broken shingles, along with roofing tiles that may be “flapping” in the wind. These are all indications that a new roof may be in your future. If that’s the case, research the newer products on the market, such as polymer shake and slate roofing tiles. These impact-resistant tiles are man-made in a wide variety of colors. Some roofing tiles, like those from DaVinci Roofscapes® that Clement chose for his home, are fire- and hail-resistant. They also have a 50-year limited warranty.

Item #2 – Clean and assess the home’s siding. Pressure-washing works well for many homes to remove dirt and algae that can grow on siding, but remember never to pressure-wash windows or their screens. The extreme high pressure could crack or destroy the caulking around the units. While cleaning the siding, make sure to check for changes in the exterior from the previous year and be alert to buckling, warping or insect damage that may need to be fixed.

Item #3 – Evaluate the windows. If you find that windows in the home don’t operate easily, there’s air leaking in or out of the units, or there’s condensation between the glass panes, then it may be time to seriously consider replacement windows.

Vinyl framed windows have the highest growth rate in the country due to their energy-efficiency, aesthetic appeal and durability. Some of the best have fusion-welded corners and multi-chambered construction. Plus, maintenance hassles are so low you’ll forget the horrors of rotting frames, scraping and repainting that come with wood windows. For his renovation project, Clement selected Simonton vinyl windows. The award-winning company impressed him with its 65-year history, strong product warranty and return-on-investment with their quality ENERGY STAR® qualified windows.

Item #4 – Check on the gutters. Don’t underestimate the importance of the gutter system on the home. Each year homeowners should check to make sure their gutters are unclogged and

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remain sloped for proper drainage. Plus, make sure the water running off the roof doesn't cause damage to the building structure, landscaping or property below the roof.

The Gutter Installers Association (GIA) recommends using GIA-certified contractors to perform a physical inspection of your existing gutters to check for leaks, ensure proper slope for good drainage and offer advice on a variety of gutter protection systems.

Item #5 – Spend time with the main entry door. If homeowners can see light around the door from the inside, the door is hard to close or lock, or the door itself is warped, it's time to consider a new door. Even if you can't see light, air may be moving through gaps in the weather stripping at a surprising rate.

Think about the weather conditions that a home's door faces along with the energy bills. If either run to the extreme, consider replacing an entryway with a high-performance fiberglass door (which can have up to four times more insulation value than wood doors). Homeowners can also request features such as the Tru-Defense® Door System* from Therma-Tru Doors that features enhanced weatherstripping, corner seal pad, door bottom sweep and profiled sill that all work together to provide strength and stability in the entry door.

For more home improvement tips, visit www.myfixituplife.com.

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*See www.thermatru.com for complete details on the Tru-Defense® Door Systems.

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