



Ring in the New Year!

Five New Year's Resolutions For Your Home

It's a New Year. That means it's time for the ever popular list of New Year's Resolutions. What is on your list this year? Some of the most popular resolutions are to get more organized, to be healthier and to spend more time with the people we love. Well, how about a few resolutions for your home (yes, your home) that can help you accomplish all three?

Here are a few maintenance "resolutions" for your home that will help you get more organized, be safer and healthier, and allow you to spend more time with your friends and family—because taking care of maintenance now, saves lots of time and money later!

Resolution 1: Out with the old and in with the new.

Secure those loose electrical outlets. You know, the ones the plug falls from every time the electrical cord gets a little taut. No problem. All you need is a Phillips screwdriver, needle nose pliers, and a new outlet available from any home improvement store. Three important reminders: 1. Know the location of and how to turn off the electrical circuit to the specific outlet. 2. Take your old outlet with you to the store so you can show the store attendant exactly the type you need to replace. 3. When reinstalling, remember "black (wire) to brass, white to silver".

Resolution 2: Refresh the air you breathe.

It's been touted by a well known magazine (www.thisolddhouse.com) that simply putting a few drops of vanilla extract on your furnace filter will ensure your house interior smells 'presentable.' Don't like vanilla? Try lavender, cinnamon, or pine available at most department stores.

Resolution 3: Clean it up, clean it out.

Your sink drain lines, that is. There are several easy ways to clear and clean those bathroom, laundry, and kitchen drains. Start with boiling water. That may be all you need. Still a little sluggish? Try mixtures of 1:1 baking soda and white vinegar. Allow to sit in drain for a few minutes be-

fore clearing. If you suspect hair and debris buildup, you can always remove the ball and socket connection below the sink drain that controls the stopper. Lastly, removing the P-trap may be your only solution. Any of the above, should only involve a few minutes and minimum effort and tools.

Resolution 4: Better protect your family.

Install new smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors. This is one of those tasks you've heard many times, "Remember to change your batteries when you change your clocks" (Daylight Savings Time). Well, it's been a few years now, and those detectors just need to be replaced. They don't last forever (max about 8-10 years). Battery or electric, single or combination, high or low, expensive or inexpensive, it's time to put this task on your New Year's home safety list.

Resolution 5: Clear out the clutter.

Do you remember the last time you viewed the dryer vent at the exterior of your home? It's time to clear the debris. Is the vent flapper propped open from an over accumulation of lint? Are you aware this may be an entry point for pests? Depending on the length of the dryer vent, this is a task that should only take a few minutes. Use caution when reaching inside the vent as some edges may be sharp. Don't forget to clean the vent behind the dryer as well.