

the real estate advisor

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Get your home ready for fall and winter



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Tips for organizing your home



Home prices still rising



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Prep for cooler weather

Last-minute tips for fall and winter maintenance



Fall is in full swing, but it's not too late to prep your home for the even cooler months to come. Here are four areas that probably need some attention.

Gutters

Debris can gather in your gutters even before fall arrives, and once the leaves start to come down—not to mention the rain and snow—clogs are even more likely. Be sure to clean your gutters out now to prevent clogs, and check for leaks.

Paint

If it's still dry enough to paint, check to see if any outdoor surfaces could use a fresh coat. As it gets colder and wetter, new paint won't be able to dry and cure properly, and exposed wood surfaces could suffer water damage.

The driveway

Cracks may have developed over the summer, so give your driveway a good power washing, then make the most of any opportunity to seal the driveway surface to help it endure the rain and snow.

Doors and windows

Extra air flow may have felt refreshing in the summer and early fall, but that'll change soon (if it hasn't already). Replace any missing or damaged weather stripping around your doors, and do the same around your windows. It'll keep your home better insulated and save you some money on energy costs.

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Take 5: Five tips for organizing your home

It's easy to let clutter pile up in your home, and sometimes it seems like there's not quite enough space to store everything. However, with some clever repurposing or reorganization, you can take control of your clutter and create a more efficient living space. Here are five tips to get you started on better organizing your home.

1. Start stacking: If your coffee table or desk seems like mess, stack your magazines and books. Then, place flowers or candles on top of the stack. You've suddenly reorganized and created an attractive tabletop display.

2. Bring in some baskets: A shelving unit with room for small baskets is great for organizing similar items and reducing clutter. Label your baskets (try chalk!) and it'll be easy to find specific things when you need them.

3. Tap into trays: All those items that have overtaken your bathroom counter? Find a shallow tray, and then use it to contain your bottles, lotions, and other bathroom products.

4. Tuck in your throw blanket: Rather than tossing your blanket across the arm of the couch, fold it lengthwise, then in half, and tuck it over one of the cushions on your sofa. It'll create a neater appearance and add a cool accent to your sofa.

5. Declutter your closet: Here's a cool trick for deciding which clothes you actually wear, and which ones you no longer need. Turn all the hangers in your closet backwards. When you wear something, put the hanger back the right way. After six months or a year, sell, donate, or throw out anything that's still hanging backwards.

Home prices continue to rise

Home prices have been on the rise in the last year, and the recent months have continued the trend.

September 2013 saw an 11.7 percent year-over-year increase in home prices, marking the 10th consecutive month with a double-digit year-over-year increase.

According to Realtor.com, the cities with the most significant increases in home prices are Detroit (up 44.6 percent), Las Vegas (30.7

percent), and Sacramento (up 28.9 percent).

The rise in home prices is largely attributed to low inventory in the housing market. With inventory low and prices on the rise, now could be a great time to list your home if you're interested in selling.

Of course, all real estate trends are local, so you have any questions about the housing market, refer to the best possible source: your local real estate professional.

