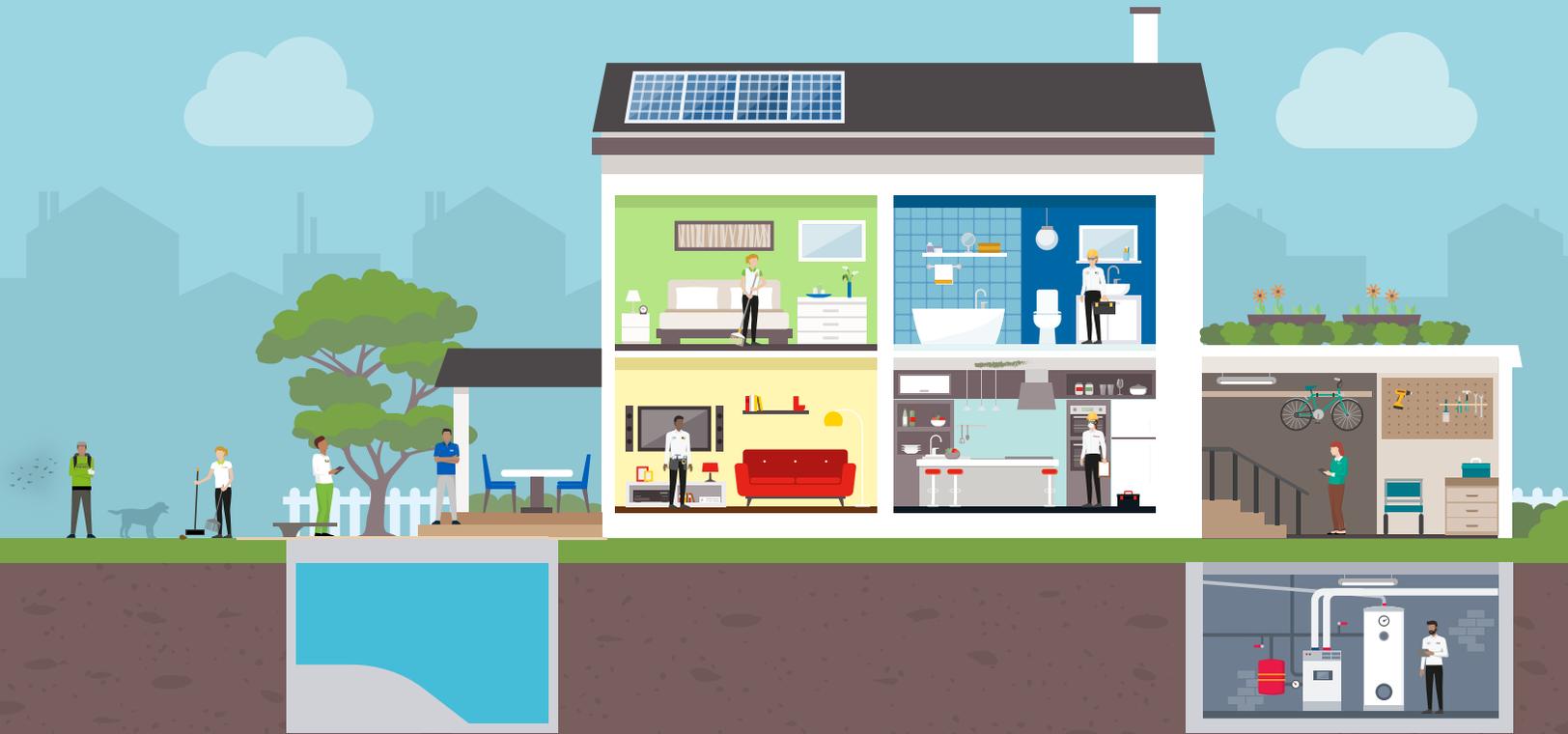


# SPRING CLEANING GUIDE



# INTRODUCTION

Wherever you might be, the onset of spring usually means it's time to break out the mop and broom and give the home a good scrubbing. But a home, like a person, needs much more than aesthetic care. It's also **important to clean and maintain all the internal working parts that keep your home functioning** at its best day to day.

The **expert home service providers at Authority Brands** know what it takes to keep your home and yard clean and safe, from its foundation to the yard beyond. Our professionals are excited to share the best tips and advice for taking your home cleaning to the next level.

From plumbing to pool care, read more about what you can do this spring and all year round for a **healthy and happy home** in the following articles from the Authority Brands experts.



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# REMOVE HARD WATER STAINS FROM TOILETS AND OTHER PLUMBING FIXTURES



Spring cleaning isn't just about getting rid of old, unwanted items and reorganizing your kitchen. You should also be thinking about your **plumbing appliances** and how you can give them a deep cleaning. This includes tackling those pesky and persistent hard water stains.

**Hard water** is a fresh water supply that contains high amounts of natural minerals such as **calcium, iron, and magnesium**. If you have hard water in your home, you know the frustration of seeing rust-colored stains in your toilet and your shower. The good news is that you can remove them.

## Here's how to make your own hard water stain remover:

### STEP 1:

Combine equal parts vinegar and water in a spray bottle.



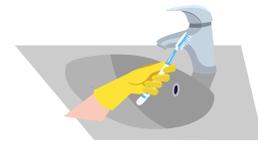
### STEP 2:

Spray the mixture over the area you want to clean. Let it sit.



### STEP 3:

Scrub the area with a toothbrush, or, if you're cleaning a stained toilet, a toilet bowl brush.



### STEP 4:

For stubborn stains, pour the solution into a small bowl and add baking soda to make a paste.



### STEP 5:

Rinse the area, then wipe it dry completely so stains don't reappear.



**You can also use WD-40® on hard water stains, but only if nothing else works.** Use a little bit around the stained area, wait a few minutes and wipe it away. If you're using it to clean your toilet, don't flush it down the drain.

## Don't Forget About Your Water Softener

If you have hard water, a water softener is a necessity. These appliances help improve the taste of your water and are also easier on your hair and skin. The Water Quality Association recommends that you check the salt levels in your softener once a month.



If you need a new water softener for your home or want to know more about hard water treatment, **contact the plumbing experts at (888) BEN-1776!**

[BenjaminFranklinPlumbing.com](http://BenjaminFranklinPlumbing.com)



# SPRING CLEANING TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR HOME



Starting in the 1970s, houses have been built tighter to keep cold air out in the winter and hot air out in the summer. While this is a great way to conserve energy, it is also a cause of **Tight Home Syndrome**, which means dirty and stale air is locked in your home. This contributes to indoor air pollution.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), indoor allergens and irritants play a significant role in triggering asthma attacks and other health issues.

This year don't forget to include your home's air in your spring cleaning activities. Follow our checklist below to make sure you're taking care of your home's air quality during spring cleaning:



**OPEN THE WINDOWS** and let some fresh air in while you're doing your spring cleaning.



**SWITCH TO FRAGRANCE-FREE** cleaning products, laundry detergent, dish soap, etc.



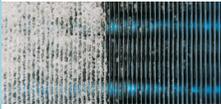
**GET MORE HOUSEPLANTS** to help naturally remove toxins in the air.



**HAVE YOUR DUCTS CLEANED** by a professional.



**SWITCH OUT YOUR HEAVY CURTAINS AND RUGS** for ones with thinner fabric, as they will capture less dust.



**REPLACE YOUR AIR FILTERS.**



**ORGANIZE YOUR COAT CLOSET AND USE IT!** The more you wear your jacket or other outdoor clothes throughout the house, the more outdoor allergens you're spreading inside.



**ASK A PROFESSIONAL** which air quality system is best for your home.

If you want to be healthier and more comfortable in your home, it's a good idea to start by improving your indoor air quality. Your local **One Hour Heating & Air Conditioning** team offers a full range of indoor air quality services for your climate and lifestyle.

Contact our professionals at  
**(800) 893-3523** today!

**OneHourHeatAndAir.com**





# TOP 5 TIPS TO PREPARE YOUR ELECTRICAL FOR SPRING



For all the great things that springtime brings - flowers, better weather, Cadbury cream eggs - it also brings some not-so-great things - allergies, flooding, burrowing animals! That's why it's important to remember when you prepare your home for spring, you don't forget to look after your electrical system.

As a homeowner, you should always know where to find the **main switch in your electrical panel** for emergency shut down. This will ultimately help you out of a bind when it comes to some of the problems that occur during the spring, like seasonal rains or flooding. It's also wise to be prepared by following the top five tips below!

## Mister Sparky's Top 5 Tips to Prepare Your Electrical for Spring:

- 1 REPAIR ANY WATER LEAKS** around all electrical fixtures. Make sure the power has been turned off before stepping into a flooded room!
- 2 LOOK FOR INSECTS BUILDING NESTS IN ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.** Certain bugs, like fire ants, are drawn to electrical hardware. Cockroaches and bed bugs like to curl up in tight, dark, and warm places, like electrical panels.
- 3 LOOK OUT FOR RODENTS** chewing on your electrical equipment. Small critters (even snakes and birds) like to build their nests in warm places, like your electrical panel! Think about organic repellants or plastic sleeves for your wires and cords.
- 4 LOOK FOR PLANTS INVADING ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.** Springtime growth can make its way into your electrical system and can cause major damage.
- 5 INSPECT ALL ELECTRICAL CONNECTIONS TO DEVICES/APPLIANCES THAT REQUIRE WATER, SUCH AS SPRINKLERS, POOLS, OR SPAS.**



If you come across any of the above, **turn off your electrical panel immediately and call an electrician.** If you know where your panel is, you're already ahead of the game!

You may also be tempted to do-it-yourself (DIY). When it comes to your electrical system, **it's best to contact a professional** to work on your springtime projects or repairs.

Call the experts at your local  
Mister Sparky at **888-8-SPARKY**

[MisterSparky.com](http://MisterSparky.com)





During this year's spring cleaning at your loved one's house, you donated several things and threw other items away, but it is possible you forgot a key step – making sure each room is safe.

Many people who could benefit from senior home care have a high risk of falling while at home. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **one in every three adults aged 65 and older falls each year**. A dangerous fall could lead to broken hips or head injuries, but each family can make changes around the house to limit the risk of falls.

Often small and relatively inexpensive changes in each room can make a big difference.

## Safety Additions To Make Your Home Safer:

### ADDITIONS FOR BATHROOMS

- Grab bars
- A hand shower with seat
- Replace standard toilet with comfort height model
- Non-skid floors
- Additional lighting
- Walk-in showers (no thresholds)
- Blocking-in walls to support grab bars
- Vanity cut out to make sink wheelchair accessible
- Specifying levers instead of knobs for faucets and handles

### SAFETY STEPS FOR OTHER ROOMS AND HALLWAYS

- Increase lighting
- Remove clutter
- Tape down loose rugs
- Keep a flashlight near stairs for nighttime use
- Install nightlights

### ADDITIONS FOR KITCHENS

- Pull-down accessories
- Non-skid mats
- Levers instead of knobs
- More lighting



Many home safety changes in other areas of the home include simple ideas that can be done in an afternoon!



Always consult your healthcare provider when there is an increase in falls in the home. Homewatch CareGivers can provide a **complimentary in-home consultation** that includes a falls-risk assessment.

Find your local Homewatch CareGivers  
at **(888) 404-5191**

[HomewatchCareGivers.com](http://HomewatchCareGivers.com)

# PICKING UP YOUR DOG'S POOP: HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KNOW



We all love our furry best friends. They bring so much joy to our day-to-day lives. However, not every part of being a pet owner is luxurious, this includes picking up after them.

**Dogs produce just under a pound of waste per day.** When not picked up, this waste can **take up to 12 months to fully break down.** So, over a month or a year, you may see how overwhelming a buildup of your dog's poop may become and how harmful it can be to the environment. With that in mind, we present you with some of the most important reasons to pick up after your pet and some suggested methods to do so.

## Reasons to pick up after your dog:

 **It Can Be Harmful to the Environment.** Regardless of your pet's health, bacteria, worms, and other parasites thrive in your pet's waste. If it gets washed away by rainwater, it can flow into drainage systems or end up in lakes, streams, and rivers.

 **It Can Be Harmful to You or Your Neighbors.** It doesn't matter whether you're gardening, entertaining, or playing in the yard, dog feces carry easily transferable dangers upon contact, including Giardia, ringworm, roundworm, and E. coli, leading to sickness. Other pets who are welcomed into your yard may also come in contact with your pet's leftover waste. If they eat or roll around in the waste, it can be just as harmful to them as well.

 **It Can Be Harmful to Your Pet.** When your pet becomes sick, contagions are often passed through their deposits into your yard. The longer your dog's infected waste stays on the ground, the greater the contamination becomes and the higher chance your dog has to potentially catch the infection again.

 **It Can Be Harmful to Your Lawn.** People may think their pet's waste could be helpful to the growth of their lawn, just like cow manure. However, dog poop is nothing like cow manure and instead contains high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, which causes your lawn to be brown over time.

## Some tips for cleaning up:

There are many ways to clean up after your dog, so pick what works best for you!

 **USE A POOP BAG.**  
**Easy, Portable, & Disposable (Especially on Walks)**

Biodegradable bags are available, which are better for the environment.

 **USE A POOPER SCOOPER.**  
Pick up poop with a tool, like a Pooper Scooper, and dispose of it in the trash or by flushing it down the toilet. Some pet owners hate picking up after their dog because of its smell. Some products freeze the poop to get rid of the smell before tossing it in the trash.

**HIRE A POOPER SCOOPER SERVICE.**  
Let pet waste removal companies, like us at **DoodyCalls**, clean your yard. Whether you need a one-time clean or want to step a routinely scheduled clean, we are happy to help.

**Find out why we're the country's leading provider of poop scooping services.**

**Call us at (888) 659-6558 to find a DoodyCalls location near you today!**

**DoodyCalls.com**





# YOUR HOME CHECKLIST: REDUCE MOLD, WATER, WIND, AND FIRE DAMAGE

As a homeowner, it can be challenging to keep on top of the myriad maintenance tasks for your property. Beyond day-to-day cleaning and upkeep, how do you protect your space from mold, water, wind, and fire damage?

Our Maintenance Checklist below helps you keep track of important tasks like replacing your appliance hoses, controlling humidity, and trimming trees. Following these will go a long way in **helping to prevent damage, keep occupants safe, and maintain property value.**

## Home Maintenance Checklist to Help Prevent Damage

### MOLD

- Deep clean high-risk areas: bathrooms, kitchens, basements, laundry rooms
- Control humidity using a moisture meter and/or dehumidifier
- Install vents or fans if necessary
- Keep humidity below 50° including when not at home



### WIND

- Install storm shutters
- Trim trees
- Remove exterior debris
- Secure or anchor outdoor furniture

### FIRE

- Install smoke alarms and test monthly
- Add fire extinguishers to each floor
- Reduce use of candles, cigarettes, and other hazards
- Inspect HVAC, electrical, and mechanical systems every three months



### WATER

- Inspect pipes, appliances, and roof
- Replace appliance hoses every five years
- Insulate exposed spigots and pipes during freezing temperatures
- Clear gutter to prevent pooling



**Whether your property sustained extensive damage from mold, wind, fire, or water, STOP Restoration experts are here to help.**

Reach out to us at  
**(844) 500-4775**

[STOPrestoration.com](http://STOPrestoration.com)





# BENEFITS OF GREEN CLEANING

One of the pitfalls of doing an intense spring cleanse of your home is having to use harsh, chemical-heavy cleaning products. But did you know **you can still get that deep clean** using products that are safer for you, your family, your pets, and the environment?

## Six Benefits of Green Cleaning



**1. Safer for the Environment.** Green cleaning products are **naturally derived, non-toxic, and biodegradable**, meaning they have less impact on the environment. Other chemical cleaning products may contain ingredients from non-renewable sources and have toxic impacts that can hurt the world's ecosystem. The Clean Water Action's **Green Cleaning Guide** recommends looking for items that are: non-toxic, biodegradable, phosphate-free, packaged in bulk, have a natural fragrance, and contain no dyes, chlorine, and hypochlorite.



**2. Safer for You and Your Family's Health.** When you use green products in the home, you can feel **safe and comfortable** knowing that your family is not breathing in harsh chemicals or having them on or near your skin. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), side effects of chemical cleaning products can include headaches, eye, nose, and throat irritation, and asthma.



**3. Safer for Little Ones.** Children and household pets are **more vulnerable to harsh chemicals** found in typical cleaners due to their smaller size. With pets and children being closer to the ground and on level with the surfaces being cleaned, it is always best to be sure that you are using non-toxic green cleaning products, especially if they are prone to eating treats off the floor or direct surfaces.



**4. Better Air Quality.** Not many of us like the harsh smell that cleaning chemicals and strong fragrances can leave behind. When you use green cleaning products, you **do not have to worry about lingering smells** that can have asthma, allergen, or skin side effects.



**5. Cost-Effectiveness.** Many at-home all-purpose cleaners **can be created using everyday products** such as rubbing alcohol, dish soap, baking soda, and vinegar. And if you would like your DIY cleaner to be slightly scented, add essential oils!



**6. Better Ingredients Awareness.** The EPA only requires companies to include "chemicals of known concern" under ingredients on their cleaning labels. When you purchase green cleaning products or create your own, you have a much **better understanding of what is being used** throughout your household.

**At The Cleaning Authority, we use cleaning products that are environmentally responsible or sustainable, unless you tell us otherwise.**

Learn more about why green cleaning is so important  
and what we can do for you by calling

**(888) 658-0659**

[TheCleaningAuthority.com](http://TheCleaningAuthority.com)





Spring means warmer weather and burgeoning plants. It also means the **return of some pests**, like mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes aren't only a nuisance, they are also a **danger to you and your loved ones** and can carry diseases that are dangerous to the **people and pets** that you love.

Mosquito Squad's experts came up with the **7 T's**, helpful tips to protect your family and home from mosquitoes.

## The 7 T's of Mosquito Control



1  
**TIP**

**Get rid of standing water in your outdoor spaces.** Standing water may be in your child's plastic toys, areas underneath downspouts, plant saucers, or dog bowls. Other areas may include traps, gutters, and flat roofs.



2  
**TOSS**

**Remove excess grass, leaves, firewood, and grass clippings from your yard.**



3  
**TURN**

**Turn over larger yard items that could hold water, like children's portable sandboxes, plastic toys, or birdbaths.**



4  
**Remove TARPS**

If tarps stretched over firewood piles, boats, or sports equipment aren't **taut**, they may be holding water that you should remove.



5  
**TAKE care**

**Take care of home maintenance needs that can lead to standing water.** This includes cleaning out gutters, making sure downspouts are adequately attached, keeping your grass cut low, and checking irrigation systems for leaks.



6  
**TEAM up**

Despite taking all precautions in your own home, **talking to neighbors is a crucial component of mosquito and tick control.** Homes with little space between lots can mean that mosquitoes breed at a neighbor's house and affect your property.



7  
**TREAT**

Utilize **Mosquito Squad's Barrier Treatment** around your home and yard.

To find out how to help further reduce mosquitoes and ticks from your yard, contact Mosquito Squad at **877-MO-SQUAD**

[MosquitoSquad.com](http://MosquitoSquad.com)

And, be sure to ask about Mosquito Squad's barrier treatment, which helps eliminate up to 85 - 90% of mosquitoes on a property.





# CHECKING FOR SIGNS OF TREE TROUBLE



Trees have survived without our help for millions of years, so why should we need to give them any assistance? A little of the right care at the right time can mean the **difference between your tree surviving and your tree thriving**. But you have to know what to look out for.

A **visit from a professional arborist** working for an insured local tree company is almost always free, but there are many signs of trouble anyone can look out for.

## Signs your tree may need some help from the professionals:



 **Late leafing out** or **early leaf drop**

 **Small leaves or a thinner canopy** than other nearby trees of the same species

 **Fine sawdust** (frass) at the base of the trunk

 Large sections of **bark falling off**

 **No trunk taper**, the trunk looks like a telephone pole where it meets the ground or looks pinched

 **Roots crossing** over the trunk

 Large amounts of **dead branches** throughout the tree

 **Cracks, creases, or places where the bark folds** in between the branches

 **No leaves at the tips** of many branches, especially at the top

 **Heaving soil near the base of the tree** during wind

 **Signs of insects** such as webs, droppings, sticky liquid dripping from the tree, caterpillars, holes in the leaves, or unusual lumps on the leaves or stems

 Pale, mottled, or otherwise **discolored leaves**

 **Creaking sounds**



Any of these signs, especially more than one of them at once, or anything else that seems unusual is cause to have a professional evaluate the tree. Trees generally do a good job taking care of themselves, but a little bit of attention and care can go a long way towards ensuring your tree has a long life.

If you have questions about the health of your trees, contact Monster Tree Service today at  
**(888) 744-0155**

[MonsterTreeService.com](http://MonsterTreeService.com)

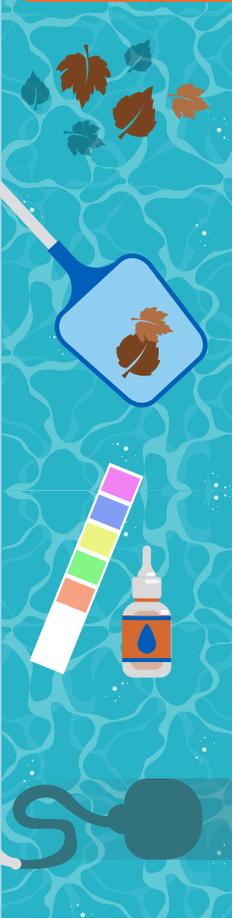


If there is a swimming pool in your backyard, chances are you have been looking forward to diving into it in the near future. As spring gradually gives way to the heat of summer, **it's the perfect time of year** to start thinking about getting your pool ready for its first swim of the season.

## Preparing Your Pool

If you want to tackle the job of swimming pool preparation yourself, you may want to set aside a Saturday or two to be sure you cover all your bases. Every pool is different, but here are some basic steps to include on your pool prep to-do list:

### Pool Prep for Summer To-Dos:

- 
- Clear out any leaves, dirt, and other debris that may have collected in and around your pool during the off-season.**
  - Remove any standing water from your pool cover, if you have one, and remove it. Clean and store the pool cover for use next winter.**
  - Use a pool skimmer to remove leaves and large debris from the pool water, and empty the skimmer baskets.**
  - Clean your pool's filters and verify that all equipment is working properly.**
  - Add water if needed.**
  - Check pH levels and add chemicals.**
  - Vacuum and scrub the whole pool, including steps and benches.**



ASP pool service technicians know that getting a pool ready for swimmers involves much more than just clearing out dirt and leaves – **pool owners need to be careful** to ensure the health of the water is optimal as well. Algae blooms and harmful bacteria such as E. Coli can grow in pools that are not treated properly.

There is a lot to know about preparing a swimming pool for its first use of the season. With so much that goes into taking care of your backyard oasis, it is well worth making the call to see what **professional pool service** is all about.

Contact America's Swimming Pool Company at  
**(800) 734-7886**

[ASPfranchising.com](http://ASPfranchising.com)



Authority Brands is the premier home services franchisor in North America.

**Learn about all our brands at [www.AuthorityBrands.com](http://www.AuthorityBrands.com).**

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