

# National Center for HEALTHY HOUSING



## Costs for Creating a Healthier Home

The National Center for Healthy Housing developed the following list as a guide for homeowners and tenants to budget healthy home maintenance projects. A healthy home is one that is constructed, maintained, and rehabilitated in a manner that is conducive to good occupant health.

The costs listed below are approximate; actual costs

may vary according to desired product model, size of structure, geographic region, code requirements, and other factors. To maintain a healthy home, occupants should keep it dry, clean, safe, ventilated, free from contaminants and pests, maintained, and thermally controlled.

*Revised May 2018.*

### Costs for a Typical Two-Story Single-Family Home

KEEP IT DRY	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Drain pan.</b> Install a drain pan under your water heater to capture water and prevent moisture problems.	\$22	Pro
<b>Dehumidifier.</b> Place dehumidifiers in basements and other damp spaces to remove excess moisture.	\$130-\$250	DIY
<b>Fix downspouts</b> (includes downspout, elbow, and flex-a-spout downspout extension). Repair downspouts to drain water away from the foundation and prevent moisture intrusion.	\$30	DIY
<b>Water alarm.</b> Place a water alarm near the sump pump or water heater to notify you of flooding or water leaks.	\$12-\$25	DIY
<b>Repair water damaged ceiling (4' x 8' patch and installation).</b> A drywall professional can replace/repair water damage to reduce mold growth and maintain structural soundness.	\$350	Pro

KEEP IT CLEAN	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Track-off mats.</b> Place a mat on the inside and outside of every door that leads to the outside.	\$12-\$20	DIY
<b>Nontoxic cleaning supplies</b> (includes a mop and two buckets—one for soapy water and one for fresh water—and nontoxic cleaning products). Clean up dust to eliminate contaminants such as lead dust, allergens, and chemical residues. Pay particular attention to cleaning refrigerator drip pans and range hoods.	\$30-45	DIY

KEEP IT VENTILATED	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Install/replace exhaust fans (including installation).</b> Install fans in bathrooms and over the range to reduce moisture and contaminants in bathrooms and kitchen. Ensure that these appliances vent to the outside.	\$225-500	Pro

KEEP IT CONTAMINANT-FREE	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Wire shelving.</b> Install wire shelves to prevent the collection of dust and avoid off-gassing from particle board.	\$70	DIY
<b>Radon test kit.</b> Test for radon in the lowest level of your home to prevent lung cancer from radon exposure. To learn more about radon and how to receive an affordably priced radon home test kit or to contact your state radon office, visit <a href="http://www.sosradon.org">www.sosradon.org</a> or call 1-800-SOS-Radon (1-800-767-7236).	\$15	DIY
<b>Radon mitigation.</b> Hire a professional to install a radon mitigation system to prevent radon gas exposure.	\$700-1,500	Pro
<b>Lead-based paint inspection/risk assessment.</b> Hire a professional to test your home for lead. Call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD to find a professional in your area.	\$450	Pro

KEEP IT PEST-FREE	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Pest exclusion.</b> Keep pests out by filling cracks and crevices with copper mesh, expanding foam, cement, and caulk. Avoid using pesticides, which can be harmful to your health.	\$10–\$50	DIY
<b>Integrated pest management</b> (price of a visit by an IPM professional). IPM is a safer and usually less costly option for effective pest management. An IPM program employs common-sense strategies to reduce sources of food, water, and shelter for pests.	\$150	Pro
<b>Trash can with sealable cover.</b> Sealable trash cans prevent rodent and pest infestation.	\$20–\$30	DIY

KEEP IT SAFE	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Nightlight.</b> Install nightlights in dark hallways and bathroom to help prevent falls.	\$5/2-pack	DIY
<b>Nonskid pads for carpet runner.</b> Install nonskid pads under carpets to help prevent slips, trips, and falls.	\$25	DIY
<b>Smoke detector.</b> To prevent fire-related deaths, place a smoke detector on each level of the home, including the basement.	\$15–\$30	DIY
<b>CO alarm.</b> To prevent carbon monoxide poisonings, place an alarm on each floor and outside of sleeping areas.	\$30–100	DIY
<b>Bath mat.</b> Place a bath mat in each bathtub to prevent slips and falls.	\$7–\$15	DIY
<b>Water heaters.</b> Set water heater thermostats to 120° Fahrenheit or below to prevent scalds.	\$0	DIY
<b>Anti-scald shower diverter.</b> Install anti-scald devices in water faucets and showerheads.	\$75–100	DIY
<b>Grab bar</b> (including installation). Place grab bars in bathrooms to prevent slips and falls.	\$75	DIY
<b>Upgrade electrical system.</b> A professional electrician can upgrade older systems to prevent electrical shock and fires.	\$300–\$1000	Pro

KEEP IT SAFE: BABY SAFETY ITEMS	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Protector for sharp furniture edges.</b> To prevent cuts and bruises, install these on all sharp edges.	\$10 per table	DIY
<b>Stair gate.</b> Install stair gates at the top and bottom of stairs to prevent injury due to falls.	\$40	DIY
<b>Childproof cabinet latch.</b> Attach cabinet latches in drawers and cabinets to prevent access to poisons and sharp objects.	\$10/5-pack	DIY
<b>Handrails.</b> Place handrails on both sides of stairways with spindles no more than 3.5 inches apart.	\$150–\$150	DIY
<b>Rails for a child's bed.</b> Place rails on the side of a child's bed to prevent falls.	\$30	DIY
<b>Window guard.</b> Install window guards in upper-story (non-fire escape) windows to help prevent falls.	\$30–\$50	DIY
<b>Outlet protectors.</b> Plug plastic cover outlets into electrical outlets to prevent electrocution.	\$6.50/36-pack	DIY
<b>Window blind cord safety device.</b> Install these devices on all mini blinds to prevent children from strangulation in blind cord loops.	\$5–\$10	DIY

KEEP IT MAINTAINED	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Repair cracks and holes in foundation.</b> Seal up cracks and holes where pests and moisture can enter your home.	\$6/sq. ft.	DIY
<b>Fix peeling paint.</b> Fix peeling lead-based paint in homes built prior to 1978. Hire a contractor trained in lead safety for renovations and major repairs to homes built before 1978. To find a trained professional, call 1-800-424-LEAD.	\$750–\$3,500	Pro
<b>Replace furnace filters.</b> For maximum filtration, replace filters every four months with a MERV-11 filter.	\$35/4-pack	DIY

KEEP IT THERMALLY CONTROLLED/ENERGY-EFFICIENT	Approximate Unit Cost	DIY or Pro?
<b>Tune existing equipment/replace filters.</b> Hire a professional once or twice a year to ensure that your heating and cooling system is running well. Replace filters on forced-air systems as directed by the manufacturer (1–4 times/year) to protect your furnace and also help clean your air.	\$150–300	Pro/DIY
<b>Conduct an energy audit.</b> Use this directory ( <a href="http://www.resnet.us/directory/search">http://www.resnet.us/directory/search</a> ) to find a certified energy auditor. They can help identify ways for you to conserve energy and lower energy bills.	\$300–600	Pro
<b>Seal ducts.</b> If you have a forced-air heating/cooling system, check for gaps/leaks in the ductwork. Seal with mesh/mastic so conditioned air gets to the rooms where you need it.	\$50–150	DIY
<b>Air seal and add insulation.</b> By sealing and insulating the spaces between your living space and spaces beyond (i.e., outdoors, attics, crawl spaces, garages), you can keep the conditioned air in and hot/cold outdoor air out. This will make you more comfortable and save energy.	\$250–500	DIY/Pro
<b>Install a programmable thermostat.</b> A heating/cooling professional can install a programmable thermostat for you. Set it at a comfortable temperature during the hours you're active at home. Set it to save energy when you're away or asleep. If you're handy, read the directions; you might be able to install the thermostat yourself.	\$35–125	Pro