

# YOUR HOME

SEPTEMBER  
2007

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING



**C**alling all pack rats: Are you ready to conquer clutter once and for all? The National Association of Professional Organizers ([www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net)) offers these handy tips.

## Kid's Room

- Place bins and boxes on lower shelves so a child can put away the toys.
- Label storage so it's easy for children to put items where they belong.
- Provide low hooks to hang up sweaters, pajamas, jackets, book bags, etc.
- Take children with you when you go to donate unused items. This helps them learn to part with things.

## Closets

- Pull out everything you haven't worn in the past year.
- Display what you want at your fingertips and store the rest on top shelves or in drawers.
- Make sure you can see what you have in your closet.

- Consider installing good lighting.
- Hang like items together — shirts, pants, dresses, etc.

## Kitchen

- Consolidate things that work together, such as baking pans, electrical appliances, plastic containers (with lids), and pots and pans.
- Use drawer dividers to keep utensils in order.
- Rotate food staples out of your pantry.
- Feel the flow of activity. Place glasses near the sink or refrigerator. Put snacks in a convenient drawer or cupboard.

## Garage

- Decide how to use the space. Is it a workshop? Is it a storage center?
- Toss things that don't work!
- Sort, purge and properly store treasures.
- Consider floor-to-ceiling shelving, racks, stackable drawers, hooks and pegboards.

## Cold-Weather Prep

The signs of fall are all around: golden-hued leaves, crisp temperatures and shorter days. As you prepare for the months ahead — storing summer clothes, checking heating systems and making sure your home is well insulated— don't forget the landscape around your home.

If you've been mowing all spring and summer, it's not time to quit just yet. Continue until the grass stops growing (the weather in your area will determine when this happens). And speaking of mowing, don't forget to take care of your trusty lawnmower. Drain it in late fall, because gas left in the machine all winter will get gummy and may make startup difficult when spring rolls around.

As the temperatures drop, so will leaves from the trees around your home. It's important to rake lawns regularly so the grass can "breathe." How long can you wait before breaking out the rake? Most gardening experts say you shouldn't go longer than three or four days. However, if the layer of leaves is particularly thick or has been weighed down by rain, the sooner you rake, the better.

If your area gets snow and ice, you'll want to protect deciduous flowering shrubs under a lean-to or similar structure. Begin by building a wire cage that is secured into the ground with poles. Attach chicken wire or heavy-gauge wire to the poles and then fasten burlap to the sides of the structure to protect the shrubs from damaging wind.

Last but not least, remember your garden hose. Drain it before storing it for the winter and then turn off your outside water supply to prevent pipes from freezing or bursting.



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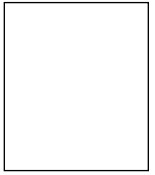
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A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF RESIDENTIAL SPECIALISTS



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home?

Please mention my name.

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Natural stone countertops, which are less expensive than they were a few years ago, are gaining popularity and are expected to last a lifetime. Cultured marble countertops have a life expectancy of about 20 years.

Source: The National Association of Home Builders/Bank of America Home Equity Study of the Life Expectancies of Home Components

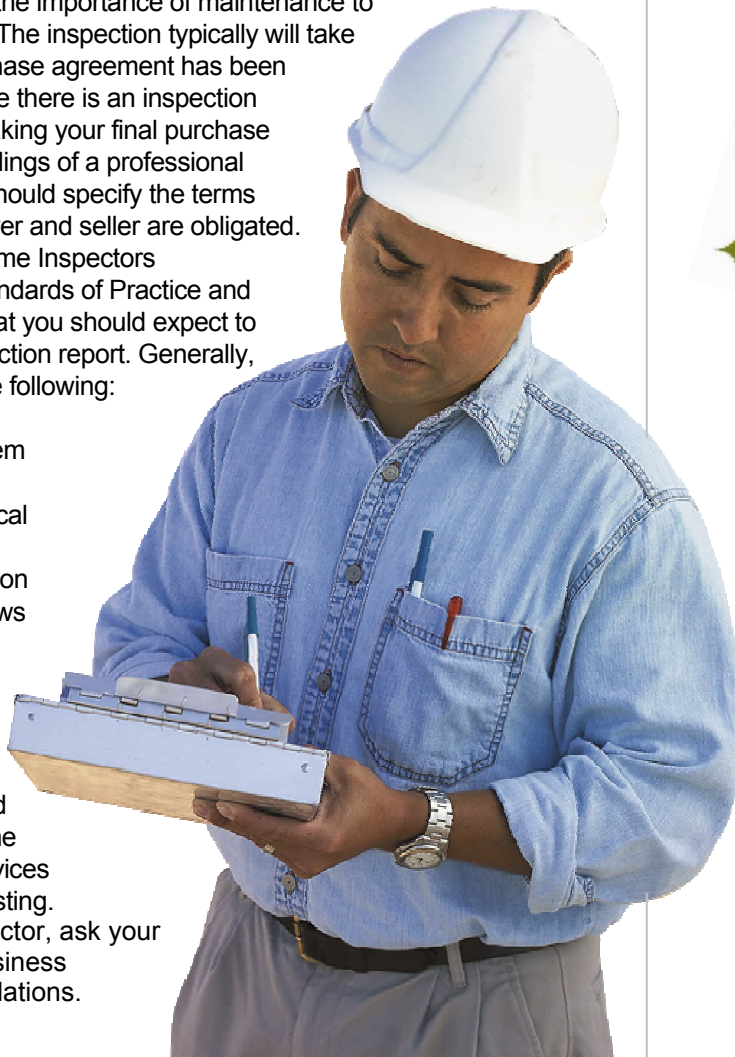
## Home Inspection Know-How

Whether you are buying a home or selling one, a home inspection is an essential part of the process. It may identify the need for major repairs or uncover builder oversights, as well as highlight the importance of maintenance to keep the home in good shape. The inspection typically will take place after the contract or purchase agreement has been signed. Before you sign, be sure there is an inspection clause in the sales contract, making your final purchase obligation contingent on the findings of a professional home inspection. This clause should specify the terms and conditions to which the buyer and seller are obligated.

The American Society of Home Inspectors ([www.ashi.org](http://www.ashi.org)) publishes a Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics that outlines what you should expect to be included in your home inspection report. Generally, it will cover the conditions of the following:

- heating system
- central air conditioning system (temperature permitting)
- interior plumbing and electrical systems
- roof, attic and visible insulation
- walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors
- foundation, basement and structural components

Fees for a home inspection vary geographically and depend on factors such as the size of the house, its age and optional services such as septic, well or radon testing. To find a qualified home inspector, ask your agent as well as friends or business acquaintances for recommendations.



### \* DID YOU KNOW

A growing focus on the environment and sustainable products continues to push natural, earthy hues to the forefront.

Yellows and blues, **leaf-like greens** and organic browns bring the outdoors in.

Source: The Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute