Sweet Apple
HOME MANAGEMENT

# The seasonal walkthrough

What a trained eye looks at, in order, four times a year. Takes about two hours with a flashlight, a phone camera, and a notepad. Photograph anything you check — a photo from last season is how you know whether something changed.

> Most of these items are a glance. The point isn't to fix anything today. It's to find the small thing while it's still small, and to write it down.

## Outside, walking the house

- [ ] Roof from the ground: lifted or missing shingles, moss, debris in the valleys, flashing around the chimney and vents
- [ ] Gutters: full, sagging, pulling away, seams dripping
- [ ] Downspouts: connected at the ground, pointed away, extensions in place
- [ ] Grading: soil sloping toward the house anywhere; mulch piled against siding
- [ ] Siding and trim: peeling paint, soft wood, gaps at corners and around windows
- [ ] Caulk at windows, doors, and where pipes enter
- [ ] Brick: stair-step cracks, white staining (water behind it)
- [ ] Foundation: new cracks wider than a pencil PRO
- [ ] Deck: soft boards, loose rails, ledger board where it meets the house, stair stringers
- [ ] Driveway and walks: heaving, trip edges, settling at the garage
- [ ] Steps and handrails: tight, well lit
- [ ] Exterior lights and motion lights working
- [ ] Hose bibs: dripping, frozen in winter, covers on after November
- [ ] Irrigation: broken heads, zone spraying the house, backflow preventer cover in winter
- [ ] AC condenser: two feet clear all around, coil fins clean, pad level, no vines
- [ ] Dryer vent flap outside: opens, no lint ball, no bird nest
- [ ] Gas meter and regulator: nothing growing on it, no smell
- [ ] Trees: limbs over the roof, dead limbs anywhere, trunk damage
- [ ] Fence and gates: posts solid, latches work
- [ ] Crawlspace vents and door: closed in winter, screens intact

## Attic and crawlspace (flashlight)

- [ ] Attic: daylight through the roof deck; dark or wet insulation; stains on rafters
- [ ] Attic: disconnected or crushed ductwork; bath fans venting into the attic instead of outside
- [ ] Attic: droppings, nests, chewed wires PRO
- [ ] Exposed pipes in attic or garage before winter

- [ ] Crawlspace: standing water, wet soil, vapor barrier in place
- [ ] Crawlspace: sagging insulation, mold smell, termite tubes on piers PRO
- [ ] Crawlspace: dehumidifier running and draining

## Systems

- [ ] HVAC filter: date on it, replaced if due
- [ ] Condensate line: clear; float switch not tripped; cup of vinegar in spring and summer
- [ ] Thermostat batteries (if it takes them)
- [ ] Furnace: any rust, soot, or burning smell on first run of the season
- [ ] Water heater: age on the label; rust or water at the base; pressure-relief valve not dripping; expansion tank present
- [ ] Water pressure at an outside spigot with a $10 gauge: 40–80 psi
- [ ] Electrical panel: cover on, breakers labeled, nothing warm to the touch, no buzzing PRO
- [ ] GFCI outlets: press test, then reset — kitchen, baths, garage, outside
- [ ] Under every sink: drips, soft cabinet floor, corroded supply lines
- [ ] Supply lines: braided steel, not rubber — washer, toilets, sinks
- [ ] Toilets: running, rocking at the base, flapper closing
- [ ] Washer hoses: no bulges; dryer vent hose not kinked
- [ ] Garage door: auto-reverse stops on a 2×4; rollers and hinges lubricated; springs not rusted through PRO
- [ ] Sump pump: lift the float — it should run
- [ ] Main water shutoff: turns, and everyone knows where it is

## Inside, room by room

- [ ] Smoke and CO detectors: test button; date on the back (replace at 10 years)
- [ ] Fire extinguisher in the kitchen: gauge in the green, within date
- [ ] Ceilings: new stains, especially below bathrooms and around chimneys
- [ ] Windows: open, lock, no fog between panes; screens intact
- [ ] Exterior doors: latch, lock, weatherstrip seals, threshold tight
- [ ] Bathrooms: grout and caulk at the tub and shower; exhaust fan pulls a tissue
- [ ] Floors: soft spots near doors and under windows
- [ ] Fireplace: damper opens and closes; no smoke smell; last sweep date
- [ ] Range hood filter clean; refrigerator coils vacuumed; water filter dates
- [ ] Any outlet or switch that's warm, discolored, or sparks PRO

## Once a year: easy to live in

- [ ] Lighting on every path, step, and stair — brighter bulbs where it's dim
- [ ] Night lights between bedroom and bath
- [ ] Loose rugs and cords where people walk
- [ ] Handrails on both sides of stairs, solid; a rail at the entry step
- [ ] A sturdy grab point in the shower; a bath mat that doesn't slide
- [ ] Thresholds and door transitions that catch a toe
- [ ] Smoke detector within reach to silence, or a hush button on a remote

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PRO marks the items where a finding means calling someone, not fixing it yourself.