

How to: Maintain the value of your home

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Tony Welch, Registered Valuer and Team Leader at QV New Plymouth and David Cornford a Registered Valuer at QVhomevalue Wellington share their insights and tips about what you can do to help maintain the value of your home especially over the wet and cold winter months.

Performing regular maintenance around your property will keep small repairs from turning into larger more costly issues, and means you can quickly and easily get the property 'market-ready' if you need to sell urgently.



Keep your home updated, not necessarily upgraded.

Properties in the same area generally have similar value structures, depending on the number of bedrooms and the property's age. If your home is kept updated and well-maintained, it should keep in the same value range as other similarly updated, maintained, bedrooomed and aged properties in your area. Those homes that are not maintained can lose value compared to other similar homes around them and if maintenance is left too long it can cause real damage, significant loss of value and can make your home very difficult to sell particularly in slower markets.

"Updates don't have to be a huge cost, e.g re-spraying existing kitchen cabinetry (vehicle spray-painters are good at this), and replacing outdated cupboard handles is a much cheaper option than full replacement.

Re-decorating with neutral colours is one of the best value-for-money exercises to do for your home." Tony Welch – QV New Plymouth.

If you want to *upgrade* your property with luxury or out of the ordinary features, it's important to remember what is desirable to you, may not matter to a prospective buyer. There is no guarantee that luxury fittings will increase the financial value of your home.

Keep your home clean and tidy – garage included.

This will save you time when it is time to sell. A side-effect will be that more attention will be given to details you might normally overlook, which could warn you about potential problems in advance.

Pay Attention to Your Roof and Gutters

"The roof should be washed down every 12 months – with special attention being given to areas that don't get rain washed such as under the eaves. Consult your roof manufacturer for specific information regarding cleaning. You may need to wash the roof more often in coastal, geothermal or highly industrial areas to keep salt, sulphur and other deposits to a minimum. Washing the roof also gives you an opportunity to check the general condition of the roof."

Clean the gutters out at least twice a year. If you are finding a great deal of debris in your gutters and live in an area with a lot of trees, consider having a protective mesh cover installed on your gutters. These covers will keep debris from falling into the gutters and causing problems for the system." David Cornford, Wellington.

Re-painting the exterior of your home

Houses need to be repainted or restained every 5-15 years depending on where you live (coastal properties need to be repainted more often than non-coastal properties) as well as which materials your house is built with and what your home was last painted or stained with.

"Low maintenance material can be used to build/repair your home e.g. fibrolite bathroom wallboards under the eaves or verandas do not require repainting" Tony Welch –QV New Plymouth.

"Wash down the exterior cladding annually – this will extend the life of the paintwork and keep the exterior looking "fresh" for longer." David Cornford, QV Wellington

Curb appeal

An untidy view of your house from the street could put a buyer off your home before they get inside so if you are looking to sell make sure you improve the street appeal of your property.

This includes keeping your berm/verge tidy and under control, making your front door easy to get to, keeping weeds under control, mowing the lawn, and repair any cracks or potholes in driveway or paths.

"Keep moss sprayed regularly to avoid permanent damage to driveways, paths etc. Continual water-blasting can 'leave a key' for the moss and lichen to return more quickly.

"Maintaining a tidy entrance, fencing and garden is important; most buyers are looking for easy care gardens. Elaborate high cost layouts, retaining walls etc. are hard to turn into value when selling, particularly if they are too expensive relative to the cost of the dwelling." Tony Welch – QV New Plymouth.

Here are a few more reminders that homeowners should be aware of:

Insulate and choose energy efficient options

Make your home more economical to run in the long term by installing energy efficient options and this will be a good selling point – buyers are starting to expect homes to be insulated and if your home is not insulated this could detract from its value

Check your plumbing. A leak caught early is much easier to fix than a leak that may have been damaging your home for some time.

Assess your wiring. Faulty wiring is a fire hazard. It's better to know about it and plan how you will fund it, than having to deal with that when you want the property on the market.

Make small repairs as soon as possible to avoid them turning into large repairs. Also, repair the cosmetic damage caused by issues you have already repaired. Otherwise when selling prospective buyers might think the problem is still there.

Consider your floor coverings. If your carpet needs replacing, you could change to hard wood floors or laminate instead. A fully carpeted house may not be on every buyer's wish list.