

Home Checklist: January. 10 things to do in and around your home now to keep it and its various systems running smoothly in 2010.

1 Let there be dark!

In other words, Virginia, it's time to take down the Christmas lights over the garage.

2 Clear the clutter.

Very, very carefully, wrap and put away every ornament and every light and every Christmas decoration. Very, very carefully put them in boxes and label the darned things so you can [find them](#) more easily next year. (Now, was that so hard?)

3 Out with the old, in with the new.

Clean out your closets to make room for Santa's bounty. Share what you don't need anymore with the less fortunate.

4 The party's over...

So clean your holiday [linens](#) and put them away till next year. Ditto for those festive reindeer plates. Box them carefully with cardboard between the dishes so Blitzen doesn't wind up with a chipped antler.

5 Soft stuff.

Scoop up all the decorative pillows, the afghans, the throws, etc., and launder them or send them to the cleaners.

6 Hard stuff.

Sanitize hard surfaces such as counters, telephones, etc. (It's the cold season, after all).

7 Happy houseplants.

Clean [houseplants](#) add a breath of fresh air to a room. Dusty houseplants contribute a more funereal tone. Clean them and they will clean your air. Simply wipe the leaves with an electrostatically charged cloth. It works like magic.

8 Yours are fake?

No problem. Blow dry silk flowers clean, or else pop them in a plastic bag with a little salt and shake vigorously.

9 More spicy info.

Clean your [pantry](#). Toss foods your kids will never eat; foods that have long since expired; spices that have lost their oomph.

10 And on a cold, icky day when you've absolutely nothing else to do ...

Clean all the electronics in your home. Clean the videotape heads, the CD player, the remotes, the TVs. Wipe down your video camera. Read the directions (finally) for your digital camera. Try storing all warranties and manuals in one file so you'll know where they are.