



Prioritize Those Home Repair Projects!

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*If you are already working with an agent, this
is not meant as a solicitation for that business.*

*M*any of us are carefully managing our resources in this slower economy. We've had to make lots of hard choices. While it's pretty easy to figure out whether a trip to Paris is in the cards, if you're short on money it's often hard to know which of the projects around your house can wait until you're a bit more flush ... and which really require you to tackle them now (so they don't end up costing more later).

The folks at Money Magazine did some research on this very issue, and here's a summary of what they found, in order of most critical to tackle. Please note that costs are averages, and vary can vary significantly depending on your particular situation.

Electrical systems. Left unfixed, electrical problems can cause fires – and electrocution. **You may have a problem if:** your circuit breakers trip frequently, your lights dim when you plug in a new appliance, outlets that accept only two-prong plugs, or outlets that are loose or "hot". **Check the problem:** Hire a licensed electrician to review the situation. **Replacement cost:** \$4,000 to \$10,000 to rewire your home; less if a complete rewire is not required.

Basements. Structural problems in your foundation can lead to cracking and shifting on the upper floors of your home, putting the integrity of your home at risk. **You may have a problem if:** you see piles of sawdust (from wood-boring insects), there are split or bowed beams, posts are rotted or appear to have moved, or if there are cracks in the masonry (horizontal cracks are especially problematic). **Check the problem:** Contractors will usually look free of charge, then provide estimates. A home inspector who is particularly expert at foundation issues can also be hired to review the situation. **Repair cost:** \$3,000 to \$8,000 for large projects. If only posts and beams need replacement, costs would run from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Roofs. Water is a nightmare for

homeowners, and an issue in many parts of the country. A roof with holes or leaks can lead to a whole host of problems – rot, mold, electrical short circuits, insects, and roaches. **You may have a problem if:** you see stains or dampness on your ceiling, shingles are curling/missing/broken, a composition roof has lost all its granules, there is green algae growth on your shingles, you see or hear animals or insects in your attic. **Check the problem:** Have a roofer inspect your home. Typically there is no charge, but you will likely also receive a bid (and a sales pitch!) from the roofer. **Replacement cost:** \$5,000 to \$15,000 for composition roofs; more for shingle, tile, or metal roofs.

Gutters. Gutters move water away from your home, and are as important as the roof. It's best to replace gutters at the same time you replace your roof; if you do the gutters first they'll likely be damaged when you replace the roof, and you'll have to do them again. **You may have a problem if:** you can see the gutters are dented or disconnected, if there is water pooled around the foundation, or if the basement is flooding near the downspouts. **Check the problem:** Next time it rains, go outside and see if the gutters are working or if they are overflowing. **Replacement cost:** \$1,500 to \$3,000 for standard gutters.

Exterior walls. Exterior paint is not merely decorative – paint provides a tight seal from weather and insects, and protects your home. **You may have a problem if:** your paint is peeling, cracking, or blistering. **Repair cost:** \$4,000 to \$10,000 should cover the cost of a professional painter.

While it's never exciting to spend money on these five issues, doing so will keep your home in good repair. Ultimately, a well-maintained home means more money in your pocket when you sell, and attending to the items which also have a cosmetic component (roofs, gutters, and exterior walls) also increase the street appeal of your neighborhood – which helps keep values (and prices!) up. If you have other home repair questions, give me a call at 360-620-2690 or send an email to mollyells@windermere.com.



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Excelling in the Impossible*

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