

HANDY TIPS

from



As we move into the fall, it is important to address a few issues around your home to protect your most important investment.

KC Handyman has a **Fall Maintenance Checklist** to help you keep your home in top shape to avoid more expensive repairs later.

A sample of the checklist items includes:

EXTERIOR

Gutters and Downspouts:

Make sure gutters and downspouts are free of debris and do not leak. Also, inspect your fascia boards (behind gutters) for rot and repair as necessary.

Grading: Check to be sure

your grade slopes away from your home to avoid excess water against the foundation.

Shingles and Flashing:

Inspect shingles for wear or damage. Inspect boots around plumbing penetrations for cracks and holes which can lead to water damage.

Siding/Exterior Cladding:

Inspect siding for damage or rot. Inspect flashing details around windows/doors including caulk joints.

HVAC

Furnace and AC: Have an

inspection done by a qualified installer (ask us for a reference if you need one) to clean and inspect the burner, fan unit, and humidifier (if installed).

Dryer Venting: Inspect

dryer vent for lint build-up and condition of pipe. Dryer vents should be hard piped to avoid holes and tears that may cause fire hazards.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Storm Windows: Inspect

all storm windows (if applicable) to ensure proper drainage from weep holes and weather-tightness.

Doors: Adjust storm doors

to fit. Inspect weather-stripping to ensure tight fit.

Windows: Check operation

and lubricate where necessary. Inspect seals to identify areas of air infiltration.

The full checklist includes additional items. All will be inspected during a walk-through, and an estimate will be provided if repairs are needed. All work is guaranteed for a full year.

To schedule a maintenance check and get a report for your home for only \$55, please contact handyman@kaufmanconstruction.com or (515)981-9708.

Learn Remodel Basics

Kaufman Construction is planning to host two Remodel Basics workshops this fall to help homeowners understand the essential aspects of a large or small remodeling project.

Both workshops will be offered several times, and will focus on the basics homeowners should know before and during a remodeling project, including an overview of the three phases that comprise most projects: preproduction, production, and post-production.

Watch for more details in future newsletters.



TOUR REMINDER!

You'll get great ideas for remodeling projects when you visit homes on this year's

Tour of Remodeled homes September 20-21.

Tickets are available at each home.

The two Kaufman Construction projects are at

1001 Briar Ridge in West Des Moines, and

9816 Valdez Drive in Urbandale.

Same Materials, New Styles for Home Exteriors

Updates and perspectives on architectural design and trends • By Devan Kaufman

Choosing or changing your home's exterior is one of the most important decisions you can make, because the "curb appeal" you create will greatly influence the value of your home. Luckily, revamping your home's exterior usually is a great investment.

According to the [latest annual survey](#) by

Remodeling Magazine, replacing your home's siding is one of the least expensive home improvement projects you can undertake, yet has the highest return on value, which means you'll recoup nearly all of the cost when it comes time to sell.

So what makes a great exterior?

High quality materials will make the biggest difference, as well as proper installation. Many materials today also are low-maintenance when compared to wood materials:

Fiber cement board remains a popular siding material because it is very sturdy and fire resistant, insect resistant, and will not rot. However, if it is installed wet, it will shrink and leave portions of the interior exposed, requiring the siding to be replaced. Proper priming and painting will help durability, and it is available in pre-painted strips that offer a 25-year warranty.

Cedar is an upscale siding option that is popular among homeowners seeking to blend their home's exterior with their natural surroundings. Although it requires

more maintenance, it has excellent thermal conductivity, helping to keep the house cool in the summer and warmer in the winter. Cedar is available in a variety of finishes, and can be mixed easily with other materials such as stone or stucco.

Manufactured or cultured stone

products also provide good variety and mix well with other materials for home exteriors. Today's stones are lighter weight, lower cost, and available in numerous colors, sizes, and patterns.

Stucco is another great exterior option because it is strong and low maintenance, and can be used

to create a range of striking textures.

Stucco, along with cultured stones, generally is more expensive than cement board siding, which is one reason why many homeowners opt to use cement board as the primary siding and incorporate the other more costly materials as accents on every side of the house (homeowners should resist dressing only the face of the house, then putting lower quality vinyl siding on the other three sides).

Although many of these materials are familiar because they've been around for years, your contractor or designer can help you find the right combination of styles, colors, and textures to create the unique curb appeal for your home.



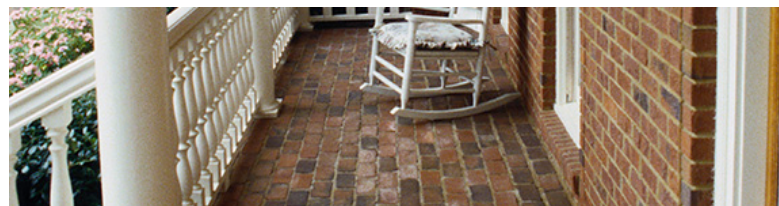
COMBINING DIFFERENT EXTERIOR MATERIALS, SUCH AS CULTURED STONE AND STUCCO, WILL GIVE YOUR HOME UNIQUE "CURB APPEAL."

Fireplace & Stone Center Offers Variety

Homeowners can see a wide variety of exterior siding materials at the [Fireplace & Stone Center](#), a division of Lumbermen's.

The experts at the Fireplace & Stone [showroom](#) will show and explain the differences between brick, cultured stone, natural stone, and ProStone. They also keep a database of brick and stone houses so homeowners can see the end-result of the various designs and applications. Fireplace & Stone also offers approved cleaners for brick and stone, and also sells brick and stone for use in landscaping.

Showroom hours are 9-5:30 M-F, and 9-noon on Saturdays.



WHO CARES ABOUT DESIGN ANYWAY?

Read our [August newsletter](#) to learn what to expect from your project designer, and why the design phase is so important.

the ASK EXPERT

I keep hearing how the housing market is in a big slump, so should I delay my remodeling project until the economy gets better?

Although the real estate market in central Iowa is considered stronger than the national market, many agree this is not a great time to try to sell your home. So why not turn it in to the house of your dreams?

- If you have been in the house for a while, you probably have equity built up to help with the expenses of a remodel.
- If you plan to remain in your home for at least five more years, then remodeling is usually a good investment in the home's value.
- Homeowners can usually recoup much of their remodeling costs when it does come time to sell their home. See the [Remodeling Online Cost vs. Value](#) annual report for details.
- You can always phase-in your project over several seasons to help give you more time to evaluate your situation.
- If you are one of the fortunate ones who has sold a home or did not have a home to sell, you may be able to buy a great bargain, and use your savings to remodel.

Do you have a home design or remodeling question, or a maintenance problem that's been nagging you for months?

Send your question to us at expert@kaufmanconstruction.com and we'll respond in an upcoming issue of our newsletter.