

Index

• A •

acrylic sealers, 321–322
active ventilation, 26, 62
air chambers, 133
air-conditioning system
 about maintenance of, 26
 filter replacement, 204
 proper sizing, 205
 window units, 206
alarms. *See* home-safety systems
All-Purpose, Handy-Dandy
 Cleaner, 357–358
aluminum siding, 93–94
annual maintenance tasks,
 37–38, 254
“Appliance MD” (Otto “Butch”
 Gross), 267
appliances. *See also* specific
 appliance
 about maintenance of, 28–29
 adjusting water pressure,
 134–135
 cleaning, 268
 periodic maintenance, 42–43
 safety with gas and electricity,
 267–269
 as source of carbon monoxide,
 302–304
asbestos
 as “must do” project, 33
 vinyl flooring, 230
asphalt driveways, 330–331
asphalt shingles, 81–82
assumptions about you, 3
attics
 adding insulation, 102–103
 ventilation system, 201–202
automatic shut-off valves, 367

• B •

back up, water/sewer, 24–25
bamboo flooring, 237
basements
 construction, 52–53
 flood damage, 65–66, 312
 sump pumps, 65
 ventilation system, 202–204
basic maintenance skills. *See also*
 professionals, when to hire
 caulking, 363–364
 choosing the right tool, 365
 dealing with moisture, 367–368
 electrical system, 365–366
 filters and sensors, 368
 lubrication, how/what to, 364
 painting, 366
 shutting down the house,
 366–367
 testing for problems, 364–365
 what not to read, 3
bathroom. *See also* fixtures,
 plumbing
 cabinets, 249–254
 exhaust fans, 199–200, 368
 tubs and showers, 167–169
batt insulation, 100
batteries
 burglar alarms, 307
 safety system back up, 30, 300
 smoke detector, 300–301
benefits, home maintenance
 day-to-day comfort, 12–13
 enhanced home value, 15
 health and safety, 11–12
 increased energy efficiency,
 13–14
 prevention saves money, 13

- big projects
 - do small jobs first, 15–16
 - knowing your limitations, 10–11
 - when to use a pro, 45–47
 - boilers. *See* hot-water heating systems; Steam heating systems
 - bricks. *See also* masonry
 - cleaning fireplace soot, 294–295
 - foundation construction, 54
 - patios and walkways, 328–330
 - refractory mortar, 290
 - tuck-pointing mortar, 58–59
 - bubbles
 - plastic laminate, 255–256
 - vinyl flooring, 234
 - building permits, 46
 - burglar alarms
 - about maintenance of, 30
 - care and maintenance of, 306–307
 - home security tips, 306
 - burners, range/cooktop
 - electric, 270–271
 - gas, 271–272
 - bypass/bifold doors, 244–245
- C •
- cabinets
 - about maintenance of, 28, 249
 - annual maintenance tasks, 254
 - cleaning, 250–251
 - refinishing, 251–254
 - carbon-monoxide detectors
 - about maintenance of, 29–30
 - care and maintenance of, 303–304
 - as “must do” project, 32
 - carbon-monoxide poisoning, 302
 - carpet cleaning, 238–240, 312
 - Carrier, Willis, 26
 - cast-iron fixtures, 150–151
 - cathodic anode (sacrificial anode), 24, 138–139
 - caulking
 - common types of, 363–364
 - door thresholds, 120
 - drywall cracks, 210
 - furnace duct leaks, 193
 - replacement windows, 119
 - roof flashing, 86
 - stopping air infiltration, 110
 - stucco, 95
 - tubs and showers, 167–168
 - windows, 112
 - wood siding, 98
 - caustic cleaning materials, 268, 273, 296–297
 - ceiling fans, 368
 - ceilings. *See* interior walls and ceilings
 - cellphones, 44
 - cellulose insulation, 101
 - central air. *See* air-conditioning system
 - ceramic tile
 - countertops, 28
 - flooring, 237
 - grout, 257–261
 - replacing broken tiles, 262–263
 - check valve, sump pump, 65
 - checklists, 41–42
 - chimneys. *See* fireplaces
 - chopping block countertops, 264–265
 - cleaning
 - air conditioner, 204, 206
 - aluminum siding, 93–94
 - appliances, 268
 - burglar alarms, 307
 - cabinets, 250–251
 - carpets, 238–240
 - caustics, safety with, 268, 273

- concrete, 54–56, 316–319, 323–324
- countertops, 255, 263–265
- drain and waste system, 173–175
- exhaust fans, 200
- faucets, 154–155
- filters and sensors, 368
- fireplace brick face, 294–295
- fireplace chimneys, 289, 369
- fireplace dampers, 291–292
- fireplace doors and screens, 295–297
- following natural disasters, 311–312
- furnace blower/ducts, 190, 193
- gas burners, 142, 271–272
- grout, 257–259
- gutters and downspouts, 91
- hardwood flooring, 237–238
- masonry, 333
- microwaves, 277–278
- refrigerators/freezers, 279–281
- roofs/roofing, 78–81, 362
- septic systems, 183
- smoke detector, 301
- stove, behind the, 275
- stoves/cooktops, 269–270
- stoves/ovens, 272–275
- stoves/range hoods, 199–200, 276–277
- thermostats, 203
- tips for removing crud, 269–270
- toilets, 156–158
- tubs and showers, 167, 245
- vinyl flooring, 230–231
- walls and ceilings, 209–210
- water heaters, 137–138, 142, 144–146
- wood outdoor structures, 340–341
- wood shingles, 82–83
- cleaning materials, common
 - household. *See also* cleaning solutions, non-caustic
 - ammonia, 273, 275, 297
 - baking soda, 268, 271–272, 275
 - chlorine bleach, 316–318
 - ice cubes, 281
 - laundry detergent, 316–318
 - nylon stockings, 283
 - oven cleaner, 296–297
 - salt, 268
 - Tang and lemonade, 278, 281
 - vinegar/lemon juice, 268, 270, 281
- cleaning solutions, heavy-duty
 - caustics, 268, 273, 296–297
 - chemical rust removers, 352
 - commercial drain cleaners, 174–175
 - muriatic acid, 294–295, 317, 320, 323
 - oxalic acid, 341
- cleaning solutions, non-caustic
 - All-Purpose, Handy-Dandy Cleaner, 357–358
 - DIY Cleanser Scrub, 358
 - Easy All-Surface Mildew Remover, 361
 - Gentle Glass Cleaner, 358–359
 - People-Friendly Oven Cleaner, 359
 - Soda-Pop Concrete Stain Remover, 316–317, 360–361
 - Special Drain Freshener and Cleaner, 361–362
 - Super Wood Cleaner, 360
 - Super-Duper Disinfectant, 359
 - Universal Roof-Cleaning Formula, 362
- clothes dryers
 - lint trap, 283–284, 368
 - replacing the fuse, 285–286
 - vent system, 284–285

- comfort systems. *See* HVAC systems
 - composite fixtures, 152
 - composite wood
 - cleaning, 340–341
 - oil-based preservatives, 338–339
 - concrete. *See also* mortar
 - basic elements of, 315–316
 - cleaning grease and stains, 316–318, 360–361
 - dealing with mildew, 318
 - non-skid surfaces, 320
 - painting/staining, 322–324
 - pressure cleaning, 319
 - repairing/patching, 319–320, 324–328
 - sealing, 321–322
 - concrete floors, 235–236
 - concrete foundations. *See also* foundations
 - concrete block, 54
 - concrete slabs, 52–53
 - efflorescence problems, 54–55
 - sealing cracks, 56–58
 - silicone sealer, 56
 - solid concrete, 53
 - concrete steps, 324–328
 - condensation. *See also* moisture problems
 - exterior walls, 103
 - interior floors, 105
 - structural ventilation and, 201–204
 - toilet tank, 159
 - windows, 113–114
 - continuous-cleaning ovens, 275
 - contractors. *See* professionals, when to hire
 - convective heating systems, 198–199
 - conventions, navigation, 2
 - cooktops. *See* stoves/ranges
 - cooling systems. *See* air-conditioning system
 - copper
 - removing residue, 155
 - wood preservatives, 63
 - copper pipe, 126–128
 - cosmetic improvements, 35
 - countertops. *See also* plastic laminate
 - about maintenance of, 28, 249, 254
 - ceramic tile, 257–263
 - cleaning and caring for, 255
 - granite, 264
 - marble, 263–264
 - solid-surface brand name, 256–257
 - wood chopping block, 264–265
 - cracks. *See* patching holes and cracks
 - crawl spaces
 - checking floor insulation, 105
 - foundation construction and, 52–53
 - locating air leaks in, 108–109
 - vapor barriers, 62–63
 - ventilation system, 202
 - creosote, fireplace, 29
 - curb appeal, 15, 21, 35
- D •
- dampers, 291–292
 - decks
 - about maintenance of, 21–22
 - cleaning, 340–341
 - painting, 336–338
 - staining, 339–340
 - defrosting the freezer, 281–282
 - dip tube, water heater, 24, 140–141
 - dishwashers, 278–279

disintegration, concrete, 64
DIY Cleanser Scrub, 358
do it yourself. *See also* home maintenance plan
 about knowing when to, 10–11
 can be fun, 14
 categories of jobs for, 31–32
 hiring a pro instead of, 45–47
doors. *See* exterior doors; interior doors
“Double the Life of Your Roof Manual” (Cedar Guild), 83
double-action swinging doors, 243–244
downspouts. *See* gutters and downspouts
drain, waste, and vent system
 about maintenance of, 24–25
 basic elements of, 171–172
 chemical cleaners, 174–175
 foundation moisture and, 60–64
 gas water heaters, 142–144
 preventing clogged/slow, 173–175
 p-traps, 172, 179–180
 tub overflow, 169
 vent system blockages, 177–179
drain cleaners, 174
driveways, 21, 330–331
dryers. *See* clothes dryers
drywall
 for interior walls, 27
 repairing cracks/holes, 210–214
 repairing nail pops, 215–216
 texturing, 213
 truss uplift problems and, 214–215
ducts
 cleaning, 193
 clothes dryer, 284–285
 fireplace outside air, 295
 insulation, 100
 locating/fixing leaks, 192–193

• E •

Easy All-Surface Mildew Remover, 361
eave vents, 88
eave-heating devices, 88–89
efflorescence
 brick foundations and, 54
 concrete foundations and, 55
 concrete steps, 324–325
 moisture under the home and, 60
 silicone sealer as cure for, 55
elastomeric paint, 21, 192–193
“elbow grease” projects, 35
electric appliances. *See*
 appliances; specific appliance
electric heating systems, 198–199
electric water heaters. *See* water heaters
electrical system
 circuit testing, 365–366
 ground fault circuit interrupters, 33
 locating/fixing air leaks, 108–110
 “must do” projects, 32–33
electrolysis, 134, 141
emergency preparedness kit, 310
energy efficiency
 air conditioner, 205–206
 balancing a heating system, 193–194
 fireplace doors, 295
 fireplace fuels, 289
 furnace filters and, 25, 187–189
 importance of insulation for, 20–21
 money savings from, 13–14
 replacement windows, 111, 118–119
 “should do” projects, 33–35
 water heaters and, 136–138
Energy Star program, 194, 205–206

epoxy paint, 322–324
exhaust fans
 as active system, 26
 basement, 204
 dealing with moisture, 367
 filter replacement, 368
 interior ventilation, 199–200
 structural ventilation, 201–204
exterior doors. *See also* interior doors
 about maintenance of, 19–20
 locks and security tips, 306
 painting/varnishing, 121
 sliding glass doors, 122
 stopping air leaks, 119–121
exterior painting. *See also* paint/
 painting
 aluminum siding, 94
 doors, 121
 flashing, 87
 stucco, 96
 for wood preservation, 336–338
 wood siding, 97–98
exterior walls, insulating, 103–105

● F ●

fans. *See* exhaust fans
faucets
 cleaning the aerator, 154
 polishing the finish, 154–155
 protection from freezing,
 130–131
fences
 about maintenance of, 22
 care and tightening, 342–344
 cleaning, 340–341
 painting, 336–338
 sagging gates, 344–345
 staining, 339–340
fiberglass fixtures, 151

fiberglass insulation, 101
filters
 air conditioning, 204
 cleaning and replacing, 368
 furnace, 187–189
 range hood, 199–200, 276–277
 washing machine inlet, 283
 water filtration, 282
finish flooring, 18
finishes. *See* cabinets;
 countertops
fire extinguishers
 how many to have, 301
 as “must do” project, 32
 testing/using, 302, 364–365
 where it is/how to use, 43
fire hazards. *See also* home-safety
 systems
 about preventing, 299–300
 caulking around furnace flue, 88
 creosote buildup, 29, 289
 fireplace cracks, 290–291
 fireplace dampers, 291–292
 gas-line safety, 304–305
 gas water heaters, 137
 spark arrestors, 293–294
 spray painting, 349
fireplaces
 about maintenance of, 29, 287
 basic styles/types, 288
 carbon monoxide and, 302–304
 chimneys, 292–293, 369
 creosote buildup, 29, 289
 damper, 291–292
 glass doors and screens, 295–297
 having the right fuel, 289
 masonry and firebox cracks,
 290–291
 spark arrestors, 293–294
first-aid kit, 310

- fixtures, plumbing. *See also*
 drain, waste, and vent system;
 specific fixture
composites, 152
fiberglass, 151
porcelain-on-steel/cast iron,
 150–151
recycled and vintage, 153
stainless steel, 149–150
vitreous china, 152–153
- flashing
 about maintenance of, 19
 chimney, 292–293
 eave, 88
 roof, 86–87
- flooding/flood damage
 basements, 65–66
 dealing with natural disasters,
 311–312
- floor frame
 about maintenance of, 18
 locating/fixing squeaks, 66–70
 out-of-level floors, 20, 70–76
 wood preservatives and, 63
- floor jacks, 75–76
- floors/flooring
 about maintenance of, 27
 adding insulation, 105–106
 bamboo, 237
 carpet cleaning, 238–240
 ceramic tile, 237
 finding/fixing air leaks, 108–110
 hardwood, 237–238
 laminated, 236
 locating/fixing squeaks, 27, 66–70
 minimizing flood damage, 312
 subflooring, 18, 68
 vinyl sheet/tile, 229–236
- flue pipe, 292–293
- foam sealant
 insulating doors, 120–121
 insulating windows, 112–113
 stopping air infiltration, 109–110
- foam-spray insulation, 100
- forced-air furnaces
 blower compartment, 189
 duct system, 192–193
 fan belt and pulley, 190–192
 filter replacement, 25, 187–189
 inspection and service, 186–187
 replacement, 194
- foul odors. *See* odors
- foundations. *See also* basements;
 concrete foundations;
 crawl spaces
 about maintenance of, 18, 51–52
 construction materials, 53–54
 fixing common problems, 55–65
 structural ventilation and,
 202–204
 types of, 52–53
- freezers. *See* refrigerators and
 freezers
- freezing weather
 opening vent pipes, 178–179
 protecting water pipes, 130–131
 sealing bricks and stone, 293
- French drain, 64
- fungus. *See* mildew/moss/algae
- furnaces
 carbon monoxide and, 302–304
 filter replacement, 368
 improving energy efficiency, 14
 installation of flue draft stop, 88
- fuses, replacing
 clothes dryer, 285–286
 microwave, 278
- **G** •
- galvanized pipe, 128–129
- garage-door openers
 about maintenance of, 30
 care and maintenance of, 309
 safety mechanisms, 307–308
- garbage disposals, 174–175, 281

- gas appliances. *See* appliances; specific appliance
 - gas lines
 - confused with water lines, 125
 - exercising safety with, 304–305
 - shut-off valve, 43, 367
 - gas water heaters. *See* water heaters
 - gaskets
 - oven door, 275
 - refrigerators/freezers, 280
 - rubber, 87
 - gates, fence, 344–345
 - Gentle Glass Cleaner, 358–359
 - “ghost flushes,” 178
 - glass doors, sliding, 122
 - grade and slope, foundation, 60–61
 - granite countertops, 264
 - graphite/grease, 364
 - Gross, Otto (“Butch”), 267
 - ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)
 - exercising safety with, 305
 - as “must do” project, 33
 - testing for problems, 365–366
 - grout
 - cleaning and sealing, 257–259
 - removing and replacing, 259–261
 - staining, 259
 - gutters and downspouts
 - about maintenance of, 19
 - cleaning, 91
 - fixing leaks, 91–92
 - foundation moisture and, 61–62
 - gutter-protection systems, 93
 - preventing ice buildup, 88–89
- *H* •
- handicap accessories, 33
 - hardwood flooring, 237–238
 - health issues
 - as benefit of maintenance, 11–12
 - handling caustic cleaners, 268
 - handling fiberglass insulation, 101
 - “must do” projects, 32–33
 - heaters, vent pipe, 179
 - heating systems. *See also* furnaces
 - about maintenance of, 25, 185
 - duct insulation, 100
 - electric (radiant/convector), 198–199
 - forced-air, 186–194
 - hot-water (hydronic), 194–196
 - as source of carbon monoxide, 302–304
 - steam, 197–198
 - thermostats, 203
 - heating tape/wire/cable, 88–89, 106, 131
 - heat-reflective paint, 222
 - heat-resistant paint, 348
 - hinges, door, 241–242
 - hiring a contractor. *See* professionals, when to hire
 - home cooling. *See* air-conditioning system
 - home heating. *See* fireplaces; furnaces; heating systems
 - Home Improvement For Dummies* (Hamilton & Hamilton), 237, 306
 - home maintenance plan
 - categories of jobs, 31–32
 - creating, 36
 - projects you “could do,” 35
 - projects you “must do,” 32–33
 - projects you “should do,” 33–35
 - safety is included in, 43–44
 - when to use a pro, 45–47

- home maintenance schedule
about creating, 36
annual tasks, 37–38
filter replacement, 368
lubrication, how/what to, 364
monthly tasks, 40–41
periodic tasks, 42–43
seasonal tasks, 38–40
shutdown checklist, 41–42
testing for problems, 364–365
- home value, improving, 15, 21
- home-safety systems. *See also*
burglar alarms; carbon-
monoxide detectors; fire
extinguishers; garage-door
openers; smoke detectors
about maintenance of, 29–30
common sense strategies,
299–300
locks and security tips, 306
as “must do” projects, 32–33
periodic maintenance tasks,
42–43, 364–365
- hot-water heating systems,
194–196
- how to use this book
assumptions about you, 3
chapter organization, 3–5
conventions used, 2
finding specific topics, 6
icons explained, 5–6
as reference tool, 1–2
sidebars explained, 3
- HVAC systems (heating, cooling,
and ventilating), 25–26. *See*
also specific system
- 1 •
- ice dams, 87–89
icons, explained, 5–6
- indoor plumbing. *See* drain,
waste, and vent system;
plumbing system
- infiltration control, 108–110. *See*
also leaks, finding/fixing
- inside projects, 11
- inside systems and fixtures,
23–30. *See also* specific
system/fixture
- insulated windows, 111, 113–114
- insulation
about maintenance of, 20–21, 99
in the attic, 102–103
categories/types of, 99–101
in the floors, 105
heat ducts, 106–108
moisture from lack of, 60
R-value, 102
in the walls, 103–105
water pipes, 105–107, 130–131
- insulation baffles, 202
- insulation blankets, water heater,
136–137
- insurance, contractor, 46
- interior doors. *See also* exterior
doors
about maintenance of, 28
bypass/bifold doors, 244–245
common problems, 241–243
knobs, locks and latches,
245–248
pocket doors, 244
swinging doors, 243–244
- interior painting. *See also* paint/
painting
brushes and tools, 222
cleaning the walls, 209–210
cleanup from, 224
prepping the room, 218–219
primer and paint, 220–221
refinishing cabinets, 251–254
tips to make it easy, 222–223
woodwork/moldings, 220

interior walls and ceilings. *See also* drywall; plaster
about maintenance of, 26–27
adding insulation, 105–106
cleaning, 209–210
finding/fixing air leaks, 108–110
repairing cracks/holes, 210–214
repairing nail pops, 215–216
texturing, 213
truss uplift problems, 214–215

• J •

joists and girders, 18

• K •

kitchen

appliance safety, 267–269
cabinets, 249–254
dishwashers, 278–279
exhaust fans, 199–200
microwaves, 277–278
range hoods, 276–277
refrigerators/freezers, 279–282
stoves/cooktops, 269–272
stoves/ovens, 272–276

• L •

ladders

safety rules and work habit, 44
tips for buying/working on, 80

laminates. *See* plastic laminate

latex caulk, 363

latex paints

cleanup and storage, 224
for concrete, 322–324
when to use, 221

latex patching compound, 64

lead in the home

as “must do” project, 33
paint removal, 220

leaks, finding/fixing

ceilings/walls/floors, 108–110

exterior doors, 120–121

flashing, 86–87

furnace ducts, 192–193

gutters, 91–92

heat ducts, 108

if you smell gas, 269

roofs/roofing, 89–90

steam heating, 198

tub overflow, 169

water pipes, 131–132

windows, 111–113

learning experience, home

maintenance as, 9–11

licensing, contractor, 46

limitations, know your, 10–11

linoleum, 28

lint trap, clothes dryer, 283–284

little projects

do small jobs first, 15–16

do them yourself, 10–11

when to use a pro, 45–47

locks

cleaning and lubricating, 248, 364

common-sense tips, 306

loose-fill insulation, 100

lubricants, 364

• M •

manufacturers’ instructions, 36

marble countertops, 263–264

masonry. *See also* bricks

about maintenance of, 332

cleaning/sealing, 333

fireplace, 290–291

sealers, 293

stress cracks, 332

metal windows, 113

microwaves, 277–278

- mildew/moss/algae. *See also*
condensation
concrete cleaning, 318, 324
getting rid of, 167–168
masonry, 333
prepping for painting, 219
roof cleaning, 78–81
structural ventilation and, 202–204
vinyl flooring, 234–236
wood deterioration from, 335
- mismatched paint, 221
- moisture problems. *See also*
condensation; ventilation
system
bathroom/laundry, 200
concrete, 318, 322
concrete efflorescence, 54–56,
324–325
exterior walls, 103
foundation, 60–64
truss uplift, 214–215
venting systems, 367–368
- mold in the home. *See also*
mildew/moss/algae
cleaning solutions for, 79
as “must do” project, 33
refrigerators/freezers, 280
wood shingles, 83
- money-saving ideas
buy the best you can afford, 12
energy efficiency, 13–14
investing in home value, 15
prevention versus repair, 13
remodeling, 252
“should do” projects, 33–35
- monthly maintenance tasks, 40–41
- mortar. *See also* concrete
brick foundations and, 54
efflorescence problems, 55
firebox refractory, 290
masonry sealer for, 293
silicone sealer, 56, 59
tuck-pointing repairs, 58–59
- motion detectors, 306
- muriatic acid, 294–295, 317, 320, 323
- **N** ●
- nail pops, 215–216
- natural disasters
about preparations for, 309
dealing with damages, 311–312
emergency kit, 310
safety measures, 310–311
shutting down the house, 41–42,
366–367
- natural gas. *See* gas lines
- nipples, water heater, 141
- **O** ●
- odors
in carpets, 240
clogged p-traps, 172
drain and waste system, 24–25
foundation moisture and, 60
septic systems, 183
water heater, 139
- oil-based paints
cleanup and storage, 224
for concrete, 322–324
for rust prevention, 348–349
when to use, 221
- oil-based preservatives, 338–339
- oil/lubricate, 364
- oil/oil stain, wood, 96–98
- organization, sections identified,
3–5
- ornamental iron, 22–23. *See also*
rust/rust prevention
- out-of-level floors
fixing, 70–76
sticky doors and windows, 20

outside projects, 11
 outside systems and fixtures,
 17–23. *See also* specific
 system/fixture
 ovens. *See also* stoves/ranges
 cleaning, 272–275
 oven light, 276
 temperature control, 276
 owner's manuals, 268
 oxalic acid, 341

• p •

*Painting Do-It-Yourself For
 Dummies* (McMillan &
 McMillan), 366
 paint/painting. *See also* exterior
 painting; interior painting
 as basic maintenance skill, 366
 cleanup and storage, 224
 concrete, 322–324
 fireplace dampers, 292
 lead test kit, 220
 leak prevention (elastomeric), 21
 masonry, 333
 mildew prevention, 324
 rust prevention, 23, 347–349
 paneling, 224–225
 passive ventilation, 26, 62
 patching holes and cracks
 chimney caps, 294
 concrete, 319–321
 in drywall, 210–214
 drywall versus plaster, 27
 foundation, 56–58
 latex patching compound, 64
 masonry, 332
 metal surfaces, 352
 vinyl flooring, 232–234
 vinyl patching compound, 56–58
 patching wallpaper, 227

patios
 about maintenance of, 21
 grade and slope, 61
 leveling and resetting, 328–330
 People-Friendly Oven Cleaner, 359
 periodic maintenance tasks,
 42–43, 364–365
 permits, building, 46
 pesticides
 mildewcide, 79, 324, 338
 termite treatments, 345–346
 understanding hazards of, 63
 pier post
 replacement, 73–76
 shimming, 70
 pilot light, water heater, 142–144
 pipe heaters. *See* heating tape/
 wire/cable
 pipes. *See* water pipes
 plaster
 repairing cracks/holes, 27, 217
 sagging and other problems,
 217–218
 plastic laminate. *See also*
 countertops
 fixing bubbles, 255–256
 fixing chips and scratches, 256
 flooring, 236
 plastics versus metal, 351
 plumbing system. *See also*
 specific element/fixture
 about maintenance of, 23–25
 fixtures, 149
 sewer/septic system, 171
 water pipes, 125
 pocket doors, 244
 polyurethane sealers, 363
 porcelain-on-steel fixtures, 150–151
 porches, 325
 postponing maintenance, 17
 power shut-off, 43, 366–367

- power washing/pressure washing
aluminum siding, 93–94
cleaning concrete, 56
concrete, 319
French drain cleaning, 64
masonry, 333
wood outdoor structures, 340–341
wood shingles, 83, 362
wood siding, 97–98
- preservatives. *See also* wood preservation
concrete/mortar, 56, 59
foundation moisture and, 63
rubber components, 87
- preventing future problems
“must do” projects, 33
prevention versus repair, 13
“should do” projects, 33–35
- price quotes, contractor, 46–47
- primer
choosing paint and, 220
cleanup and storage, 224
- priorities, maintenance, 31–32
- product manuals, 36
- professionals, when to hire. *See also* basic maintenance skills
about knowing when to, 10–11, 365
air conditioner service, 204–205
asbestos testing/removal, 230
cooling system maintenance, 26
drain and waste system, 180–181
for electrical problems, 305
foundation settling, 64
French drain installation, 64
furnace inspection and service, 186–187, 192–193
heating duct leaks, 108
how to find and select, 45–47
microwave servicing, 278
removing lead-based paint, 220
roof repairs, 89
septic systems, 183
vapor barrier installation, 62
vinyl floor installation, 236
- programmable thermostats, 203
- protective clothing
handling acids, 294–295, 317, 341, 352
handling caustic cleaners, 268, 296–297
handling insulating materials, 101
spray painting, 349
work safely using, 43–44
- p-traps, plumbing, 172, 179–180
- **Q** •
- quotes, contractor, 46–47
- **R** •
- radiant heating systems, 198–199
radiant-barrier insulation, 100
radiators, 196–198
- range hoods
cleaning, 276–277
exhaust fans, 199–200
filter replacement, 368
- recycled plumbing fixtures, 153
- recycling, 14
- refinishing cabinets, 251–254
- refrigerators and freezers
cleaning, 280–281
condenser coils, 279–280
defrosting, 281–282
door gaskets, 280
filter replacement, 368
water filtration system, 282
- remodeling, 252
- repair versus replace, 14

- replacement windows
 - installing, 119
 - R-value, 111
 - selecting, 118–119
- retaining walls, 22, 346
- rigid insulation, 100
- rock wool insulation, 101
- roofs/roofing
 - about maintenance of, 19, 77–78
 - alternative materials, 85
 - asphalt shingles, 81–82
 - cleaning, 78–81
 - flashing, 86–87
 - gutters and downspouts, 91–93
 - ice dams, 87–89
 - locating/fixing leaks, 89–91
 - safety while working on, 78
 - wood shingles, 82–86
- rubber, preservation, 87
- rules of home maintenance
 - buy the best you can afford, 12
 - keep your eye on the doughnut, 20
- rust/rust prevention
 - basics of, 22–23, 347–348
 - can turn into a leak, 91–92
 - chemical treatments, 352–353
 - choosing primer and paint, 348
 - fireplace dampers, 291–292
 - fireplace spark arrestors, 294
 - paint application, 348–349
 - removal and repair, 349–352
 - roof flashing, 86–87
 - stove burner, 271
 - washing machine tub, 283
 - water heater, 138–139
- R-value
 - understanding, 102
 - water heater insulation, 136–137
 - windows, 111

• S •

- sacrificial anode (cathodic anode), 24, 138–139
- safety. *See also* home-safety systems; natural disasters; protective clothing
 - anchoring water heaters, 142
 - appliances and, 267–269
 - as benefit of maintenance, 11–12
 - carbon monoxide poisoning, 302–304
 - electrical system, 305
 - fire common-sense strategies, 299–300
 - fireplace maintenance and, 29
 - garage door, 307–308
 - gas water heater venting, 143–144
 - gear and work habits, 43–44
 - handling fiberglass insulation, 101
 - handling muriatic acid, 320
 - hot-water heating, 196
 - hurrying causes injuries, 15–16
 - ladders, 80
 - “must do” projects for, 32–33
 - during natural disasters, 309–311
 - natural-gas lines, 304–305
 - spray painting, 349
 - working on the roof, 78
- sandblasting, 333
- sandpaper/sanding
 - aluminum siding, 94
 - cabinetry, 252
 - chopping blocks, 265
 - composites, 152
 - countertops, 257
 - drywall, 211, 216

- exterior wood, 341
- hardwood floors, 69
- rust, 350–351
- saving money, 13–15
- screw jacks, 75–76
- sealers
 - acrylic, 321–322
 - asphalt, 330–331
 - concrete, 321–324
 - masonry, 293, 333
 - polyurethane, 363
 - silicone, 55–56, 59, 363
- seasonal maintenance tasks, 38–40
- self-cleaning ovens, 274–275
- septic system
 - about maintenance of, 24, 181
 - basic elements of, 182
 - cleaning and pumping, 183
 - minimizing flood damage, 312
 - what not to put in, 182–183
- settling/shifting, foundation
 - repairing, 64
 - squeaky floors from, 70
- sewer gases, 24–25
- sewer system. *See also* drain, waste, and vent system; septic system
 - clean-out system, 175–176
 - sewer line “fall,” 181
- shakes/shaked shingles. *See* wood shingles
- shims, floor, 68, 70
- shingles
 - replacing asphalt, 81–82
 - replacing wood, 83–84
 - wood preservation, 85–86
- showers. *See* tubs and showers
- shutdown checklist, 41–42
- shut-offs, power/gas/water
 - automatic, 367
 - if you smell gas, 269
 - safety with gas and electricity, 304–305
 - where it is/how to use, 43, 366–367
- sidebars, explained, 3
- sidewalks. *See* walkways
- siding
 - about maintenance of, 19
 - aluminum siding, 93–94
 - stucco, 94–96
 - vinyl siding, 94
 - wood siding, 96–98
- silicone sealers
 - for caulking, 363–364
 - concrete/mortar, 56, 59, 293, 321–322
- skylights, 103
- slab foundations
 - construction of, 53
 - sealing cracks, 56–58
 - vinyl flooring, 235–236
- sliding glass doors, 122
- slope, foundation. *See* grade and slope
- slow-running drains, 24–25
- smoke detectors
 - about maintenance of, 29–30, 301
 - as burglar-alarm feature, 307
 - filter replacement, 368
 - as “must do” project, 32
 - types of, 300
- Soda-Pop Concrete Stain Remover, 316–317, 360–361
- softener, water, 146–147
- soldering, copper pipe, 127–128
- solid concrete foundations, 53–54

- solid-surface countertops, 256–257
- spackle, 211
- spalling, concrete, 64
- spark arrestors, 292–293
- Special Drain Freshener and Cleaner, 361–362
- spray foam. *See* foam sealant
- squeaky floors. *See* floors/
flooring
- stainless-steel fixtures, 149–150
- stains/staining
 - concrete, 324
 - for wood preservation, 339–340
 - wood shingles, 85–86
- steam heating systems, 197–198
- sticky doors and windows, 20, 241
- stone foundations, 54
- stone paths. *See* walkways
- storm windows, 114–115
- stoves/ranges. *See also* ovens
 - cleaning, 269–270
 - electric cooktops, 270–271
 - gas cooktops, 271–272
 - ovens, 272–277
- stress cracks, 332
- stucco, 94–96
- subflooring. *See* floors/flooring
- sump pumps, 65
- Super Wood Cleaner, 360
- Super-Duper Disinfectant, 359
- sweating. *See* condensation
- swinging doors, 243–244
- thermostats
 - electric water heater, 145–146
 - heating/cooling, 203
- thresholds, door, 120–121
- to-do list. *See* home maintenance
plan
- toilets
 - cleaning the bowl, 156–158
 - emptying the tank/bowl, 156
 - “ghost flushes,” 178
 - locating/fixing leaks, 159–161
 - replacement, 162–166
 - tank condensation, 159
 - unclogging, 158–159
- tools
 - choosing/buying, 365
 - concrete repair, 325–326
 - grouting, 260–261
 - hammer tacker (staple gun), 105
 - painting, 221
 - pointing trowl, 59
 - screen replacement, 117
- trap, drain (water door), 24–25
- truss uplift, 214–215
- tubs and showers
 - avoiding overflow, 169
 - caulking, 167–168
 - cleaning, 167
 - shower doors, 245
- tuck-pointing
 - brick/block foundations, 58–59
 - firebox masonry joints, 290

• T •

- talcum powder, 67
- tankless water heaters, 146
- termites, 345–346
- texturing, 213
- thermocouple, water heater,
142–143

• U •

- ultraviolet light
 - replacement windows, 119
 - wood deterioration from, 335
 - wood preservatives and, 85–86
- Universal Roof-Cleaning Formula,
78, 362
- urban renewal, 325

• U •

valves
hot-water heating, 195–195
shut-off, gas main, 43, 367
shut-off, water heater, 141
shut-off, water main, 126, 367
steam heating, 197–198
TPR valve, water heater, 139–140
water pressure regulator, 134–135

vapor barrier
crawl space, 62–63
heat ducts, 108

varnish. *See* paint/painting

vent, clothes dryer, 284–285

vent pipes, sewer-system. *See also*
drain, waste, and vent system
basic elements of, 172
dealing with blockages, 177–179
vent pipe flashing, 87

ventilation system. *See also*
moisture problems
about maintenance of, 26
active/passive, 26, 62, 201
attics, 201–202
basements, 202–204
carbon monoxide and, 302–304
crawl space, 202
eave and roof vents, 88
exhaust fans, 200
range hoods, 199–200

vintage plumbing fixtures, 153

vinyl concrete patches, 57–58

vinyl flooring
about maintenance of, 229–230
curling, 231–232
discoloration, 230–231
fixing bubbles, 234
mildew and mold, 234–236
patching/repairing, 232–234
scuff marks, 230

vinyl siding, 94

vinyl windows, 113

vitreous china fixtures, 152–153

• W •

walkways
about maintenance of, 21
grade and slope, 61
leveling and resetting, 328–330

wallpaper, 225–227

washing machines, 282–283

waste system. *See* drain, waste,
and vent system; septic
system; sewer system

water damage. *See* flooding/flood
damage

water door. *See* trap, drain

water filtration systems
refrigerator, 282, 368
whole-house, 368

water hammer, 133–134

water heaters
about maintenance of, 23–24, 134
adjusting water temperature, 139
anchoring for safety, 142
caring for a gas heater, 142–144
caring for a tankless heater, 146
caring for an electric heater,
144–146
component parts, 135–136
controller unit, 141–142
dip tubes and nipples, 140–141
insulation blankets, 136–137
removing sludge/sediment,
137–138
replacing the anode, 138–139
shut-off valve, 141
temperature and pressure relief
valve, 139–140

water pipes
about maintenance of, 23–24
insulating, 100
noisy pipes, 132–134
protection from freezing, 130–131
quick fixes, 131–132
repairing/replacing, 126–130

- water pressure
 - banging pipes and, 132–135
 - hot-water heating, 195
 - water heaters and, 139–140
 - water shut-off valve, 43, 126, 141, 367
 - water softeners, 146–147
 - water temperature
 - adjusting water heater, 139
 - broken dip tubes and, 140–141
 - testing the TPR valve, 139–140
 - water heater limit switch, 145–146
 - water wells, 147
 - weatherstripping
 - exterior doors, 120–121
 - locating air leaks, 108–109
 - windows, 113
 - Web sites
 - American Red Cross, 311
 - appliance manual downloads, 268
 - Building Materials Reuse Association, 153
 - Cedar Guild (wood care), 83
 - Energy Star program, 194
 - Heat-Line (vent heaters), 179
 - Historic Houseparts, 153
 - Mythic Paint, 221
 - National Chimney Sweep Guild, 290
 - Serious Materials (windows), 111
 - Squeak-Ender, 68
 - Vintage Plumbing Bathroom Antiques, 153
 - whole-house filters. *See* water filtration systems
 - Wiley
 - Home Improvement For Dummies* (Hamilton & Hamilton), 237, 306
 - Painting Do-It-Yourself For Dummies* (McMillan & McMillan), 366
 - wind turbines, 26
 - windows
 - about maintenance of, 19–20, 111
 - air leaks, 108–109, 111–113
 - condensation, 113–114
 - locks and security tips, 306
 - replacing/installing, 118–119
 - storm windows, 114–115
 - window screens, 115–117
 - wiring. *See* electrical system
 - wood chopping block
 - countertops, 264–265
 - wood preservation. *See also* preservatives
 - basics for outdoor structures, 335–336
 - cleaning measures for, 340–341
 - fence posts, 344
 - oil-based preservatives, 338–339
 - paint, 336–338
 - shingles, 85–86
 - siding, 96–98
 - stains and clear finishes, 339–340
 - termite treatments, 345–346
 - wood shingles
 - cleaning, 83
 - preservation, 85–86
 - replacement, 83–84
 - wood siding, 96–98
 - work habits, 44
- Z •**
- Zen of home maintenance, 9–11
 - “zero-clearance” fireplaces, 29
 - zinc naphthenate, 63