

TIPS AND TRENDS FOR HOMEOWNERS, BUYERS AND SELLERS



**B**efore the hustle and bustle of the holiday season sets in, add winter-proofing chores to your home to-do list. Protect your home from winter's woes with these tips from RealEstate.com.

**Heating Basics** Replace old thermostats with programmable ones that allow you to lower the temperature when you're away from home. Turn on your furnace to ensure it works (run it the full cycle from warm-up to blowing heat to shutting back off again). Peek into your ducts and clean away the mold, pests and debris.

**Winter Windows** Inspect your windows and doorframes for gaps that would allow water or snow to seep in. Use low-expansion spray foam to fill any you find. Storm windows and well-hung plastic sheeting can provide an extra layer of insulation.

**On the Inside** Seal and insulate the wall around electrical outlets and pipes that connect to the exterior of your home. Check that smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors are working in case a heater or fireplace malfunctions.

**On the Outside** Clear out debris around windows. Fill cracks in your pipes with expanding foam insulation or caulk. Disconnect and drain your garden hose to prevent it from bursting. You'll also want to clip tree branches that are close to your house or car in case of a snow or rainstorm.

## Deck the Halls?

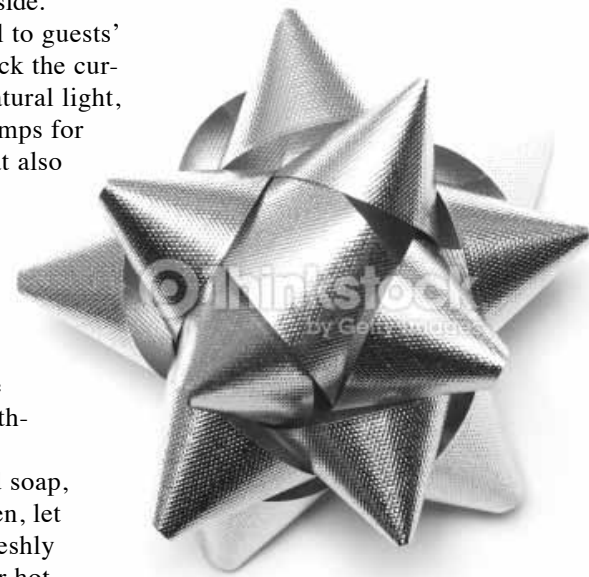
It's the most wonderful time of the year: Time to pick out the tree and haul ornament-filled boxes from the attic.

But, the next open house you have won't be for your dear friends — it will be for potential buyers. Stay festive without crossing the line with these Frontdoor.com tips.

Your yard and front door provide a sneak preview of the warm and inviting atmosphere inside. Showcase winter's beauty with a pinecone wreath on your door, and excite prospective buyers by hanging some simple lights outside.

Inside, appeal to guests' senses. Draw back the curtains to allow natural light, and add more lamps for a softer light that also fights the darkness of the season. Keep the house toasty by lighting the fireplace or switching on the heater. In the bathrooms, add seasonal scented soap, and in the kitchen, let the aromas of freshly baked cookies or hot cider circulate.

Keep the religious décor to a minimum to avoid scaring off buyers. Consider a scaled-back Christmas tree or Hanukkah menorah in the corner, gifts tucked tidily around. After all, it's still a holiday.



### fast fact » » » » » » » » » » » »

**Ceiling fans can also circulate heat. Blades rotating clockwise push warm air down.**





# GUIDING LIGHT

**N**eed a little more light in your life? See for yourself the difference that light bulbs and lamp shades can make with a room's mood. Check out these bright ideas from RealSimple.com.

**Type Cast** In the bathroom, use overhead lights to get rid of shadows; sidelights flanking the mirrors are perfect for makeup application. In the kitchen, overhead lights brighten surfaces. In the bedroom, try cozy tinted, low-wattage bulbs to give a candlelit, romantic effect. To create a grand atmosphere in the

dining room, use a chandelier. Place one directly over the table, but make sure to measure the ceiling height and table height before making a purchase. Indirect lighting — in all parts of the home — softens spaces. Small table lamps or wall sconces can also add a subtle glow.

**Safe and Secure** Use ambient lighting to brighten the exterior of your home. Motion-activated or timer-equipped lights can ensure your home's exterior is well-lit in the evenings. Don't go too dim or too bright — no need to attract intruders, nor bother your neighbors.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

Using a programmable thermostat to adjust the temperature in your home by roughly 7 to 10 degrees for eight hours a day might save you 10 percent a year on heating and cooling.



**Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.**

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