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# Give your home autumn checkup

**I**T'S THAT time of year again. Time to batten down the hatches and bundle up the house.

Fall is the best time to get the house ready to do battle with the winds, rains and snows of winter, and routine care can mean saving on major expenses in the future.

Starting at the top is often the best bet, and that means the roof. Examine it for broken or curled shingles that can mean leaks. Roofing experts say a 20-year-old roof with evident signs of wear should be checked and likely should be replaced.

If you need to make a fast, temporary repair, use flashing. According to John Saladyga in Newsday, you should cut the flashing a few inches longer on all sides than the missing shingle so it slides under the surrounding shingles. Put roofing cement on the

surface and place the flashing on it. Smear the cement along the seams where they join as well.

Have the chimney checked annually. Chimney sweeps recommend a full cleaning after about 180 uses.

**PULL OUT THE** ladder and make for the gutters this fall. First, clear out all gutters and down-spouts and check for any alignment or leakage problems.

Mike McClintock, author of "Home Sense: A Year-Round Practical Guide for the Homeowner" (Scribner), said one way to keep unwanted snow and ice from gutters is by installing heat tapes in zigzag pattern along the last few courses of shingles and in the gutter trough.

Gutter guards that keep leaves from accumulating are a good preventive measure.

Please turn to next Page

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