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## Outdoor DIY Projects to Prolong the Life of Your Home

Here's the inside scoop on the exterior of your home: Although it can take a beating from weather and atmospheric conditions throughout the year, the sooner you address the issue, the less likely the damage will lead to more and larger problems. Home improvement expert, Spike Carlsen, offers a few do-it-yourself projects that could mean more money in your pocket down the road.

### **Weatherize with silicone caulk & save.**

- Air can enter or exit a house through cracks and openings in many places and leaks can lead to higher energy bills, water damage and mold growth. The upside is that a homeowner can save 10 percent or more on his/her energy bill by air sealing, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.
- Not all caulk provides energy savings over time though. For long-lasting energy savings, choose 100 percent silicone, not acrylic caulk, which can shrink and crack over time leaving gaps for air and water to seep through. Look for GE Silicone II\* Window & Door or Paintable Silicone. Seal around windows and doors, as well as in attics and basements

### **Extend the life of your deck for years.**

- Check for loose boards and fasteners. For "popped" nails, pound them back in and then drive a 3-in. galvanized drywall screw in next to it to hold the board firmly in place.
- Gunk that's accumulated in the gaps between deck boards can hold moisture that leads to premature rot. To remove it, take an old handsaw and lightly "saw" through each gap. The blade will push the debris out of the gap so your deck can breathe.

### **Take care of leaky or overflowing gutters**

- Leaky or overflowing gutters can create problems ranging from peeling paint to damp basements.
- Use an old plastic spatula as a mini shovel to scoop leaves and debris out of the gutter. If it's too wide, trim one edge.
- Once clean, place a garden hose in the "high end" of the gutter, turn on the water and check for leaks. If there's a leak at a seam, clean the joint and apply permanently waterproof silicone caulk. If there's an actual hole in the gutter, replace it rather than patch it.

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