



The cold season is upon us especially here in Michigan! As fall is setting in and winter is just around the corner so the nights are getting colder and everyone is getting their heating appliances ready to be fired up. Preparing your heating appliance is very important for the safety of your home and this is even truer with a wood stove.

There are many steps to maintain a wood stove properly. Today I am going to give you 7 tips to [maintain](#) a healthy wood stove and keep it running efficiently for your home.

Execute Proper Burning Practices



The very first tip to maintain your wood stove is only burned seasoned firewood. The type of firewood that you burn in your wood stove is going to directly affect your stove, the flue, and the air that you breathe in your home. Kiln dried or seasoned firewood is the best fuel for a wood stove. It will produce a more consistent heat and will also burn longer. Firewood that is “green” or freshly cut will cause problems when trying to light a fire and when trying to keep it going. Green firewood will also cause larger amounts of creosote to build up in your chimney because it contains higher amounts of moisture and sap.

Click [Here](#) to find out more about Choosing the Right Firewood

Also, do not burn anything in your wood stove other than firewood. This includes things like paper, carpet, garbage, lumber supplies, plastics, etc. Burning these things will only add pollutants into the air in your home that you and your family are breathing in. To get a fire going you will simply need a Firestarter of sorts, some kindling, and a couple small pieces of split seasoned firewood. These three things will help you get a fire started in no time.

[Learn](#) more about Getting a Fire Started...

Keep the Ash Bed to a Minimum



To maintain a healthy wood stove keep the ash build-up in the firebox to a minimum. Make sure that you are emptying the ash drawer or scooping the ashes out daily. There should only be a thin layer of ash in the bottom of the firebox. Having excessive amounts of ash in the firebox will only clog up your stove. Your fire will not burn efficiently because it will not be able to get the air circulation that it needs.

I recommend keeping an ash [bucket](#) near the wood stove that you can scoop the ash into and then place it outdoors to cool. You can remove the ashes from the firebox by scooping them out with a fireplace shovel or by using an ash [scoop](#). Some ash scoops have a sifter so that you can sift out the hot coals leaving them in the firebox to assist in starting the next fire. Either way will work effectively.

Freshen up with a Fresh Coat of Paint



A third tip for you is to maintain the outside of your wood stove. This will require you to inspect the outside of the wood stove. Look for any spots that are starting to rust. No matter if your wood stove is cast iron or steel eventually over time it will begin to show spots of rust. If you do notice a spot of rust or multiple spots of rust there is a simple fix. Simply use a wire brush and steel wool to remove the rust and to smooth the area. Then you can apply a coat of fresh [paint](#) to the whole stove. This will not only protect the integrity of your stove but it will also make your stove's appearance as good as new.

Admire the Fire with a Clean View



If your wood stove has glass in the doors keep it nice and clean. Who doesn't enjoy watching the flames of a fire dance? Maintain a clear view of the beautiful dancing flames by cleaning the glass part of the door. There are a few contributing factors behind the glass getting build-up on it. The first being that you are burning a wood and there is bound to be a soot build-up anyways. Also, the amount of ash that you let build-up in the firebox will increase the amount of build-up on the glass.

The glass is a barrier between the high temperatures of the fire and the cooler room air so there will be some creosote build-up as well because of

the moisture condensing on the glass. Use a glass [cleaner](#) to remove the build-up and condition the glass. Depending on how bad the build-up is you may have to repeat the cleanings to be able to see through the glass clearly.

Perform regular Check Ups



Inspecting your wood stove does not just include the outside of the unit. You also need to inspect the firebox during regular checkups. Most wood stoves have fireboxes that are lined with firebricks so when you are inspecting the firebox look for any cracked or broken firebricks. If you do find some that are cracked or broken they should be [replaced](#) right away. The firebricks are line the firebox to help with heat retention and to protect the integrity of the firebox.

Keeping the hot fire and coals off the cast iron or steel firebox and up on the firebricks will help your wood stove last for many, many years! After all if a fire brick cracks or breaks they can be replaces but if the firebox becomes damaged the whole wood stove will need to be replaced.

Another thing to that you will need to maintain is the door [gasket](#). It will break down with use. The door gasket will be found on the main loading door and also will most likely be found on the ash dump doors. These are very easy to replace you just need to measure the entire distance that the gasket covers and buy a replacement accordingly. The gasket rope gets recemented in place and you are ready to begin burning again.

Maintain a Clean and Clear Flue



When you maintain a clean and clear flue with regular chimney cleanings and inspections your wood stove will continue its top notch performance. A wood stove is no different than any other heating appliance in the fact that is operates at its optimal potential when the whole system is clean. The frequency of the chimney cleanings will greatly depend on how often you burn in the wood stove. If you burn wood as your main source of heat you are going to have to clean more often than if you only burned on occasion.

As long as you practice proper wood burning techniques the creosote build-up should remain manageable with a brush and rod [cleaning](#) system.

However if you are burning green unseasoned wood or you are burning other items in the wood stove your creosote build-up could reach the point that you will need to call a professional for proper removal of the creosote. It is recommended that you have your chimney annually inspected by a professional no matter if you exhaust into a masonry chimney or exhaust completely with class A chimney pipe.

Provide Safe Surroundings



My last tip for you is going to be that you maintain a safe area surrounding your wood stove. This means to keep all combustibles away from your wood stove at least the minimum distance required. These distances can vary from appliance to appliance. So make sure that you check your owner's manual for these distances.

Also, place a protective covering or a hearth [pad](#) over the flooring that is directly under the wood stove and around the wood stove. Again your stoves manufacturer may have some requirements for this so it is very important to read the owner's manual.

One last thing you can do is place a [kettle](#) or a steamer on the top of your wood stove. This is not going to really help the wood stove in any way but it will help you to maintain the humidity in the air of your home. Wood stove produce a very warm dry heat and it depletes the moisture in the air.

I hope that you find these tips useful but if you still have further questions please feel free to ask your questions in the comments section. We will be sure to answer your questions as promptly as possible.