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pend on every season. The company repairs, replaces and installs asphalt shingle, slate, metal and membrane roofing systems, and also performs historic roofing restoration. From a small residential repair to a complex commercial project, the same goal applies: do the work correctly, communicate clearly and build a roof that is ready for New England weather.

Fall is an especially important time for local homeowners. A cracked or missing shingle, failing flashing, clogged gutter, poor attic ventilation or small ceiling stain can be easy to overlook when the weather is mild. Once freezing temperatures, snow and ice arrive, those little warning signs can become much bigger headaches. Altitude encourages homeowners to take a quick look at the roof and drainage system before the first freeze and to call a professional whenever something does not look right.

Winter also brings one of the region's most familiar

roofing problems: ice dams. Proper attic airflow, insulation, roof protection and drainage all matter when snow begins to pile up. Altitude helps homeowners identify concerns before winter and is available when New England weather creates roofing problems.

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Five small improvements that can make a big difference

For homeowners working with a limited budget, thoughtful small changes can provide plenty of satisfaction without turning fall into renovation season overload.

Consider these relatively easy, and budget-friendly, updates that can make the fall and winter months more enjoyable.

- **Lighting.** A new pendant over a kitchen island, a modern ceiling fixture or improved lighting in a hallway can dramatically change the appearance of a room.

- **Cabinet hardware.** Replacing knobs and pulls in a kitchen or bathroom can give cabinets a fresh appearance without replacing the cabinets themselves.

- **Switch plates and outlet covers.** This is a small detail but one that you use and see daily. New covers are inexpensive but can make an older room

look cleaner and more finished.

- **Window treatments.** Replacing faded curtains or outdated blinds can improve both appearance and privacy. Energy-efficient shades can also help reduce heat loss during colder months.

- **Paint.** A new color in an entryway, bedroom or home office can change the mood of the space almost instantly. Fall is particularly convenient for painting because cooler temperatures can make working indoors more comfortable.

The key is to concentrate on areas that homeowners and guests see frequently: an entryway, kitchen, bathroom or living room can often benefit more from a few carefully chosen improvements than from a long list of minor projects scattered throughout the house.

Bring fall color to your home's exterior

Fall is an opportunity to create an outdoor space that remains attractive well into the colder months.

Begin with the front entrance. A seasonal wreath, fall doormat, lanterns or a pair of containers filled with mums can create an inviting appearance without a major investment. Pumpkins and other gourds are also an easy way to add color to your front porch; and don't forget to incorporate some dried hydrangeas.

Planting is another option. Many shrubs, trees and perennials provide attractive fall foliage, berries or late-season interest. When selecting plants, consider their mature size as well as their appearance. A plant that looks perfect at the garden center may eventually outgrow a small space.

Planting trees and shrubs during cooler temperatures (and naturally moist soil) can give

plants an opportunity to establish roots before the heat of the following summer, but beware of the first frost date (mid-to-late October).

Fall is for raking leaves but

heavier leaf cover can smother the turf, trap moisture, and encourage mold or pests.

Fall is also a good time to overseed your lawn but it should be done by early October.

Garden beds should be cleaned selectively rather than completely. The best practice is to delay garden cleanup until early spring, leaving seed heads and stems in tact to sustain wildlife throughout the coldest months. Some dried flowers (like asters, black-eyed Susans, and coneflowers) and ornamental grasses (switchgrass, maiden grass)

provide winter interest and offer habitat for wildlife.

Finally, inspect walkways and steps before winter. Repair loose pavers, uneven surfaces and damaged handrails before snow and ice make those problems more hazardous, and more difficult for shoveling and plowing.



you don't have to remove them all. If the leaf layer is light (20% or less of your lawn), they will break down naturally, feed the soil, and shelter insects and birds. If leaves are moderate (up to 50%), you should mulch-mow them to speed up decomposition, prevent matting, and return nutrients to the soil. Any



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Great reasons to insulate water pipes

Homeowners want to do everything they can to protect their investment, and that includes both renovating a property to reflect recent trends and keeping up with routine maintenance to ensure a home does not fall into a state of disrepair.

Anticipating potential issues and planning for them is part of maintaining a home. Such anticipation is an acquired skill, but homeowners can use the experience of others to identify ways to prevent home-related issues before they arise. One issue homeowners may want to plan for is frozen pipes. The winter of 2025-2026 was notably cold. According to AccuWeather, the La Niña weather pattern was a driving force behind a particularly cold winter in various parts of the United States, including the northeast, midwest and mid-Atlantic regions. Temperatures in those regions were 10° to 15° F below normal, which AccuWeather notes laid the foundation for the most severe and frigid winter in nearly a decade.

The extreme cold that char-

acterized the winter of 2025-2026 forced some homeowners to confront issues they had not anticipated, including frozen pipes. Pipe insulation is an important part of home maintenance that some homeowners may not have been aware of as recently as early 2026, but the following are some notable reasons to add this to your home-related to-do list before winter returns.

- **Insulation prevents pipes from freezing.** Frozen water inside pipes can start what's essentially a chain reaction that can cause pipes to expand. When pipes expand, the resulting pressure can cause them to burst. By insulating pipes, homeowners can prevent them from freezing. Insulating pipes that are already behind a wall is not a simple job, so it's best left to a professional. But pipes that are along exterior walls should be insulated to ensure they do not freeze when temperatures drop and remain low. Pipes in attics, basements and crawl spaces may be ex-



posed, and homeowners may be able to insulate these on their own, though novices might still want to leave this important job to a professional.

- **Insulating pipes can save you money.** The United States Department of Energy reports that insulating hot water pipes is a notable way to save energy and money. According to the DOE, insulating water pipes reduces heat loss and can raise water temperature by as much as 2° to 4° F. That allows homeowners to lower the temperature setting on their water heaters, which saves money.

Insulating pipes also reduces the time it takes for water to warm up when turning on a faucet or shower, which in turn leads to less water consumption and lower water bills.

- **Insulation can reduce the risk of mold growth.** Winter is not the only time of year it pays to have insulated pipes. According to the insulation experts at Aeroflex®, pipes are subject to mold growth. That can happen when pipes sweat in humid climates (think of a water bottle left out in the hot sun). The resulting condensation from sweating pipes can

drip and lead to the growth of mold in surrounding areas, including within the walls. Mold growth in a home has been linked to various negative health outcomes, including respiratory issues. But insulation prevents the condensation that can lead to mold growth.

- **Insulation is inexpensive.** Homeowners who have grown accustomed to costly repairs and renovations should know that insulating pipes, particularly exposed pipes, is an inexpensive project. While it will cost more to insulate pipes within walls due to the extra work required to access such areas and address them once insulation has been installed, insulating those pipes, especially if they're along exterior walls, can greatly reduce the risk for potentially costly damage down the road.

Insulating pipes is a worthwhile undertaking for all homeowners, and can be particularly beneficial for those who live in areas with extreme weather in winter and summer.

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Fall and feeling cramped? Consider refinishing or repurposing a current space

Is it time to refinish your basement?

For homeowners who need additional living space, the basement (or attic) can be one of the most practical places to look.

A finished basement can become a playroom, family room, home office, exercise area, guest space or entertainment area. But before choosing paint colors and furniture, homeowners should determine whether the space is suitable for finishing. Things to consider:

- **Moisture.** Check for dampness, water stains, musty odors and evidence of previous flooding. Any water problem should be addressed before walls and flooring are installed. Moisture may also affect your flooring choice.
- **Layout:** Consider hiring a professional architect to help with design. Consider ceiling height, electrical service, heating and cooling, plumbing and emergency exits.
- **Local building codes:**

Your municipality may have certain requirements for renovations (specific stair dimensions, egress, etc.) so be sure to check with your local building inspector.

Even if a full renovation is not in the budget this year, fall is a good time to develop a plan, and start addressing any issues that exist. Then, you can schedule a contractor for the spring – be sure to call the contractor as soon as you know when you’ll be ready since they can book out months in advance.

As with any home improvement project, be sure to get multiple estimates and ask contractors about schedules, payment arrangements, insurance and references. A detailed written proposal can help homeowners compare bids more effectively.

Planning early does not mean committing to a project immediately. It simply gives homeowners

time to make informed decisions.

By the time spring arrives, you can be ready to move forward rather than just beginning the research process.

Make an underused room more useful

Fall can also be a good time to rethink how your current space works. If a basement renovation isn’t in your plans, consider turning an underused room into a home office, craft room, reading room or combination guest-and-work space. A formal dining room might become a library or gathering space. Even a small room can become more functional with thoughtful planning.

Begin by removing items that are no longer needed. Decluttering makes it easier to determine what the room can realistically accommodate. Consider donating your items to a local charity



either by dropping them off or arranging pickup.

Next, consider the room’s primary purpose. If it will be used as an office, adequate lighting, electrical outlets and a comfortable work surface should take priority. A craft room may require storage and durable work surfaces. Consider the latest crate craze where you can make rolling storage and workbenches out of wooden crates from local craft stores.

A guest room may need flexible furniture that can be used when visitors are not present. Built-in shelving can make good use of awkward walls, but freestanding furniture can provide greater flexibility and often be installed for less money. For a bit of whimsy, consider a Murphy (hidden) door bookcase.

Paint is another way to establish a new identity for the room. Remember, lighter colors can make small spaces feel larger, while deeper colors can create a cozy reading or relaxation area.

Do not forget lighting. A combination of overhead, task and accent lighting can make a room much more useful throughout the day. Don’t forget under-cabinet lighting and motion sensing (USB-charged) lighting can make any space more user-friendly (and safer).

When considering a project like this, the goal is not necessarily to create another perfectly decorated room, it is to make the space serve a current need for the people who live in the house.



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Sheet mulching is an easy way to build better soil

Cover lawn with cardboard boxes now, be ready to plant in spring

If you have a patch of lawn you would rather turn into a garden, there is no need to rent a sod cutter or spend a weekend digging. Sheet mulching, also known as “cardboard-ing,” is a simple technique that uses layers of cardboard and organic material to smother grass and weeds while gradually improving the soil beneath.

And fall is a great time for this project as cooler temperatures and seasonal rainfall help the materials break down, giving you a head start on creat-

ing a planting bed for spring. The cardboard blocks sunlight, weakening the grass and weeds

matter becomes part of the soil. Earthworms and other beneficial organisms can move



underneath. As moisture and soil organisms break down the cardboard, its organic

through the layers, helping improve soil structure over time. According to Penn State Ex-

tension (PSE), this can be done in three simple steps:

Prepare the area. Clear the space of rocks, debris, and any large obstacles. Mow as short as possible.

Layer cardboard. Place sheets of plain cardboard (avoid glossy or coated types) over the lawn or weeds. Overlap edges to prevent light from reaching through.

Add mulch. Cover the cardboard with 2-4 inches of organic mulch such as pine needles, dead leaves, grass clippings, or compost.

PSE recommends deeper mulch for vegetables or annuals; and lighter mulch for native perennials or poor-soil plants. To watch a video demonstration, visit <https://extension.psu.edu/sheet-mulching-lawn-to-garden-bed-in-3-steps>.

board, compost and mulch, an unwanted patch of lawn can become the foundation for a healthier garden—without all the digging.

Where to get free cardboard

There are several ways to gather free cardboard. Good sources include:

- Appliance stores (large or small). Large refrigerator, dishwasher and appliance boxes provide excellent coverage with fewer seams.
- Furniture stores. Ask about boxes from furniture deliveries.
- Liquor stores. Smaller boxes are useful for filling gaps.
- Grocery stores. Produce and shipping boxes can work, provided they aren't wax-coated or heavily contaminated with food. Some stores request advance notice to hold boxes.
- Neighbors and community groups. Post a request on a local Facebook or neighborhood group. Moving boxes (especially wardrobe boxes) are ideal.
- Your own recycling bin. Save shipping boxes for several weeks before starting (consider starting your holiday shopping early and reuse those boxes).

A few helpful hints include:

- Avoid using cardboard that has been treated with wax or contains plastic coatings, or has heavy printing.
 - Don't create thick, compacted layers that prevent water and air from reaching the soil.
 - Keep sheet mulch several inches away from tree trunks and shrub stems to prevent rot and pest problems.
 - You can thoroughly wet the cardboard first, if it will not rain in the near future.
- With little more than card-



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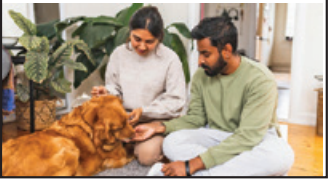
*Rent may be adjusted based on annual income limits provided by HUD.
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Your home is ready for fall, is your pet?

As temperatures begin to drop and daylight hours grow shorter, homeowners aren't the only ones who need to prepare for the changing seasons. A few simple home-improvement projects can make fall and winter more comfortable and safer for four-legged family members.

October is a good time to concentrate on comfort and organization. Replace lightweight pet beds with insulated options; add washable, non-slip paw-friendly mats near entrances; and create an indoor play area for days when outdoor time is limited. A designated spot for coats, boots, towels, leashes, and other pet supplies can also help keep mud and clutter under control.

This is also a good time to clean pet bedding, toys and food bowls. Draft stoppers around doors and windows can reduce cold air entering the house, while additional storage can keep food and supplies dry and easily accessible.

From mid-October through early November, homeowners

can focus on weatherproofing areas pets use outside. Garages, mudrooms and other areas where pets spend time may benefit from additional insulation.

Pet gates can keep animals away from muddy areas, and outdoor runs can be improved with raised platforms and wind barriers.

Outdoor lighting is also important as darkness arrives earlier. Motion sensor lights in outdoor spaces can be helpful, especially for senior dogs.

By mid-November, concentrate on projects that will be difficult to complete once snow and freezing temperatures arrive: Weatherproof a doggy door, establish a safe path to the yard or outdoor run, and consider heated water bowls designed specifically for outdoor use.

Taking care of these projects in the fall can help keep pets comfortable now and throughout the winter months.



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Why an insulated attic is a good attic

As homeowners address energy efficiency around their homes, they may want to put attics at the top of their list. Because heat naturally rises during the winter and also infiltrates the roof during the summer, a roof with insufficient insulation can be energy inefficient. Many experts attest that upgrading attic insulation is a practical and cost-effective home improvement.

A desire to reduce energy bills is a primary motivator when installing attic insulation. Data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR® program says homeowners can save an average of

15 percent on heating and cooling costs, or roughly 11 percent on their total energy bills, by air sealing and insulating attics and crawl spaces. Standalone attic insulation projects frequently achieve high rates of return.

Beyond financial matters, attic insulation also creates a more comfortable and stable indoor climate. Attic insulation will buffer the interior from extreme temperature swings. This can help preserve the integrity of the home. In cold climates, attic insulation will limit the occurrence of ice dams, which form at the eaves when heat inside living spaces escapes to the

roof. Ice dams can cause water to back up under shingles and even tear away gutters.

The U.S. Department of Energy indicates residential and commercial buildings combined account for 40 percent of the nation's total energy consumption. By utilizing attic insulation and creating a proper thermal barrier, homes can draw less power from regional grids and burn less fuel locally.

Attic insulation may not be as glamorous as a room remodel, but it is an important component of a safe, comfortable and energy-efficient home.

The benefits of a fall roof replacement

A roof is a vital component of a home that protects the structure from the elements and ensures that sun, rain, wind, and snow do not compromise the integrity of interior spaces.

Group says fall temperatures are better suited for roofing and allow materials to work the best. When temperatures are too hot, shingles can become soft and prone to scuffing, while cold



Peak Performance Roofing says the average asphalt shingle roof found on many homes lasts between 15 and 30 years. Alternative roofing materials, such as metal or clay tiles, can last much longer.

Homeowners who stay in a home for many years will likely need to replace a roof at some point. Choosing when to replace the roof may come down to selecting the right season. Experts typically consider fall the prime time to upgrade a roof for a variety of reasons.

• Moderate temperatures: Fall weather tends to be comfortable in many regions of the country. Magnolia Home Remodeling

temperatures can make materials brittle and difficult to seal.

• Comfort for workers: The same moderate conditions can make it easier for roofing contractors to get the work done. It can be extremely hot on a roof during summer, necessitating frequent breaks for workers. Winter weather conditions are not ideal for working on a roof, with snow and ice making things slippery. Fall weather can help workers feel more comfortable.

• Avoid the rush: Earl W. Johnston Roofing, LLC says spring and early summer are peak seasons for roofing contractors due to post-winter repairs. Homeowners may experience shorter wait times, better pricing and flexible scheduling if they opt for a fall roof replacement.

• Prepare for winter: Getting a roof in the fall means having a new and functional barrier against winter storms that can be hard on old roofs. It also means the roof will be ready for rainy, spring weather.

Fall is an ideal time to replace a roof for many reasons. Homeowners can use the summer to vet various roofing contractors and come up with a package that fits their schedules and budgets.

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Signs suggesting doors and windows need air sealing

When pondering projects around a house, it's easy to overlook small tasks and direct your focus toward more significant undertakings. Small projects might not generate the reactions that larger projects do, but even the simplest tasks can go a long way toward making a home more comfortable.

Sealing leaks around windows and doors is unlikely to make any homeowner's list of dream projects. However, as the moderate temperatures of fall give way to harsh winter weather, homeowners who seal leaks around their doors and windows may be surprised by how effective this simple project can be at reducing energy costs and making a home more comfortable. In fact, the U.S. Department of Energy notes that sealing inefficient windows and doors can reduce annual utility bills by 7 to 15 percent. That's a potentially significant cost savings, particularly in an era marked by rising utility costs.

Before homeowners seal their windows and doors, they



can first look for signs that these areas are allowing outdoor air in. The United States Environmental Protection Agency notes

there are some obvious signs that a home has leaks around the windows and doors. Those signs include:

- **Drafts:** If you place your hand around closed windows or doors but can still feel drafts, then there are leaks that will need to be sealed.

- **Gaps:** Gaps around windows and doors that are letting outdoor air in typically are noticeable to the naked eye. You might see light coming in through small cracks on a sunny day. These gaps may only be in one or two places, but that's enough to adversely affect energy bills.

- **Unwelcome guests:** Pests or insects may be another indicator that there are gaps around windows or doors. If you consistently see insects near a particular entryway or window, or signs of pests near doorways, that's likely because there's a gap or hole in these areas that's enabling them to access the interior of your home.

- **Odors:** It's not only your sense of vision that might detect leaks, but also your sense of smell. If you notice exterior odors inside your home even though doors and windows are

closed, then leaks around these areas may be the culprit.

- **Peeling paint or wallpaper:** Peeling paint or wallpaper is another potential indicator of a leak around a door or window. This can occur when water is entering the home through the leak. Over time, wet paint or wallpaper dries and can begin to peel. This is a potentially significant issue because it can lead to mold infestation and even structural damage to a home.

The EPA characterizes sealing behind windows and doors as a moderate to difficult project. If leaks are detected, homeowners can benefit from hiring a professional to do the job quickly and correctly.

Leaks around windows and doors can prove costly if they're not addressed promptly. As winter approaches, investigating for leaks and addressing any that are found can save money and ensure a home stays comfortable when the temperatures drop.



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How to prepare your home for fall

Where does the time go? We're not sure but it's fall already. Experts agree that the number one item on your checklist should be clean and inspect gutters, followed closely by seal gaps and cracks, clean the dryer vent, and have your chimney cleaned.

With the help of Better Homes and Gardens, Family Handyman, and House Beautiful, here are ways to prepare your home for the fall, ranked in order of difficulty.

Easy Tasks

- ❑ Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- ❑ Check for drafts, seal exterior gaps and cracks
- ❑ Clean/replace furnace filter
- ❑ Shut off and drain outdoor faucets and hoses
- ❑ Reverse ceiling fans
- ❑ Stock up on winter supplies
- ❑ Swap out seasonal decor/textiles
- ❑ Change humidifier settings or clean units



- ❑ Test outdoor lighting, replace bulbs as needed
- ❑ Store summer clothes and rotate closets
- ❑ Clean and store outdoor furniture/grill
- ❑ Schedule chimney/fireplace cleaning
- ❑ Schedule furnace/heating system service (you can change filter)
- ❑ Bleed/drain hot water radiators
- ❑ For mini-splits, wash/change filters
- ❑ Apply pipe insulation/wrap (foam pipe wrap is lightweight,

easy to install)

- ❑ Test generator, check battery, clean terminals, clear vents, remove debris

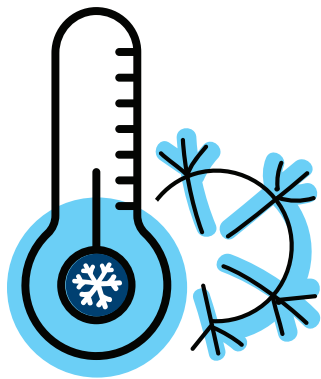
Moderate Tasks

- ❑ Inspect and clean gutters and downspouts, consider gutter guards
- ❑ Clean dryer vent
- ❑ Check windows and doors (including garage doors) for drafts, add weatherstripping or film as needed
- ❑ Lock windows and doors to create seal to prevent leaks
- ❑ Keep window wells clean

- ❑ Check/test sump pump
- ❑ Service lawn equipment before storage
- ❑ Rake leaves, mulch gardens with leaves
- ❑ Aerate, fertilize, overseed lawn; cut short one last time
- ❑ Remove ivy growing on exterior of house
- ❑ Deep clean appliances, including oven
- ❑ Check handrails and steps for sturdiness
- ❑ Plant spring bulbs
- ❑ Check insulation in attic/basement, add more as needed
- ❑ Fix cracks in driveway
- ❑ Test winter equipment

Difficult Tasks

- ❑ Check roof for loose/damaged shingles
- ❑ Remove pine needle buildup from roof, skylights, gutters
- ❑ Inspect and trim large trees near your house



It's New England: enjoy fall, think snow

- We never know when the first snow will fall so be snow ready.
- ❑ Buy a shovel and have it easily accessible (garage, mudroom, etc.)
 - ❑ Tune up, and gas/charge up, your snowblower
 - ❑ Prepare an emergency car kit (jumper cables, sand/kitty litter, blanket, water, non-perishable snacks)
 - ❑ Keep your vehicle fuel tank more than half full or vehicle battery more than half charged; monitor tire pressure as it will drop during cold weather.

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- Foundation with 4' Frost Wall Footings
- 4" Reinforced Concrete Floor
- 2" x 6" Construction
- Plywood Roof and OSB Wall Sheathing
- 2 Double Hung Windows
- Vinyl Siding
- 2 - 9' x 7' Overhead Garage Doors
- 30 Year Architectural Shingles



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**WORCESTER COUNTY! DON'T WAIT
FOR THE LEAK - GET YOUR ROOF
WINTER-READY!**

**ALTITUDE'S
FALL ROOF
CHECKLIST.**

Fall is the time to prepare.
Don't let a small roof issue
become a serious
winter emergency.



**CHECK SHINGLES &
ICE/WATER SHIELD**

Check for damaged shingles and
proper ice & water shield installation.



INSPECT FLASHING

Inspect chimneys, skylights, vents
and roof transitions for loose or
damaged flashing.



**CHECK ATTIC INSULATION
& VENTILATION**

Proper insulation and airflow help
prevent moisture buildup and reduce
the risk of ice dams.



LOOK FOR SIGNS OF LEAKS

Check ceilings and attic spaces for
stains, moisture or damp insulation.



**CLEAN GUTTERS
& DOWNSPOUTS**

Remove leaves and debris
to keep water flowing properly.



TRIM BACK BRANCHES

Cut back limbs touching or
hanging over the roof.

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BEFORE THE SNOW FLIES, KNOW YOUR ROOF IS READY. CONTACT ALTITUDE TODAY!

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