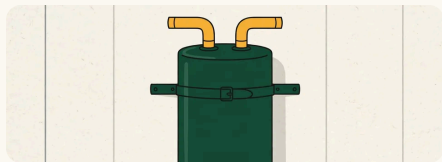




The 20-minute earthquake home check.

Twelve things to fix or find, most of them with a wrench and a free evening.

1 Strap the water heater



- Two straps to the wall studs, top and bottom
- A kit costs little and takes half an hour
- A fallen heater means a gas leak and no water

2 Anchor tall furniture



- Bookcases, dressers, wardrobes
- Furniture straps into a stud, not drywall
- Especially anything near a bed

3 Secure the TV



- A strap kit or a wall mount
- Flat screens tip easily
- Same for anything on a stand

4 Move heavy things low



- Nothing heavy on a shelf above a bed or couch
- Heavy and breakable down low
- Light things up high

5 Latch the kitchen cabinets



- Child latches on upper cabinets
- Keeps dishes and glass inside
- Cheap and ten minutes

6 Mirrors and pictures



- Closed hooks, not open nails
- Nothing heavy over a bed
- Earthquake putty under small objects

7 Find the gas shutoff



- The valve at the meter, a quarter turn with a wrench
- Hang the wrench on the meter
- Only shut it off if you smell gas

8 Find the water shutoff



- Usually at the street or where the pipe enters
- Tag it, show the family
- Broken pipes flood a house fast

9 Find the breaker panel



- Know the main switch
- Label the circuits once
- A flashlight hung beside it

10 Check the chimney and roof



- Loose bricks fall first
- Have it inspected if it is old
- Tall chimneys are the common failure

11 Shoes and a light by every bed



- Glass on the floor is the common injury
- A flashlight in the nightstand
- Kids too

12 Know the safe spots



- Under a sturdy table, or an interior wall
- Away from windows and tall furniture
- Say it out loud with the family once

Strap the heater, anchor the tall stuff, find the gas valve. The rest is bonus.

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