

Winter Home Energy Efficiency Tips

free ways to save in the winter

- Set thermostat settings at 68 degrees or as low as possible while you are home.
- Set thermostats to 60 degrees when you're away from home or install a programmable thermostat to do that automatically. If you have a heat pump, make sure you install a programmable thermostat so that you can gradually warm the house back up before you return home.
 - If you have a heat pump, do not make a lot of changes in the thermostat temperature during heating season unless you are going to be away for several days. Otherwise, the auxiliary heat will come on which makes the system costlier.
- Wear layers of clothing and use extra blankets.
- Close fireplace damper when not in use.
- Don't block vents and radiators with furniture, curtains, or rugs.
- For windows that receive direct sunlight, keep shades open during the day and close them at night.
- Reduce the temperature setting on your water heater to 120 degrees or less.
- Clean the coils on the bottom or the back of your refrigerator regularly.
- Recommended temperature for your refrigerator is 37 to 40 degrees and 5 degrees for the freezer.
- Inspect and clean your dryer vent tube on your dryer periodically. Built up lint can lead to longer drying times and can be a fire hazard.
- Take 5-minute showers instead of baths.
- Run washer, dryer, and dishwasher only when you have full loads.
- Wash clothes in cool or cold water whenever possible.
- Since some appliances use electricity all the time, plug them into a power saving electric strip or turn a regular strip off when the appliances are not in use.
- Scrape your dishes rather than rinsing them before putting them in the dishwasher. Air dry dishes instead of using the drying cycle feature on your dishwasher.

low-cost ways to save

Heating

- Replace the system's filter every three months or more often if it gets clogged with items like pet hair.
- Schedule regular tune-ups for the heating and cooling system for optimum efficiency.

Windows/Doors

- Replace missing window putty or glazing as needed.
- Caulk window and door frames on the exterior side.
- Replace weatherstripping on exterior doors.
- Check door bottoms and thresholds to make sure air is not escaping. Replace when necessary.

Air Sealing

TIP: On a windy day, place a lit stick of incense to check for air leaks. A horizontal flow of the smoke means you have a leak. Dirt and spider webs can also indicate an air loss.

- Install foam gaskets behind light switches or outlets located on exterior walls.
- Magnetic kitchen exhaust fan covers can keep air from leaking when fan is not running.
- Seal holes in the exterior walls, crawl space or basement where air conditioning and plumbing pipes penetrate the building.
- Close off openings between a masonry chimney and surrounding wood framing in the attic with sheet metal or foil-faced foam board insulation.
- Install weatherstripping around the perimeter of attic access hatches and pull-down stairs.

Ductwork and Air Distribution

- Seal leaky duct connections with duct sealing mastic. Do not use duct tape, as it will dry out and come loose.

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low-cost ways to save continued...

Water Heating

- Install an insulation blanket around your water heater.
- Install low-flow showerheads in your bathrooms.

Lighting and Appliances

- Test your refrigerator gaskets by closing the door over a piece of paper. If you can easily remove it with the door closed, consider replacing either the gaskets or the appliance.
- Install timers, photocells, or motion switches on exterior lighting fixtures.

investments for larger savings

Insulation

Here are the minimum recommendations:

- Attic Insulation: R-38 (12 to 15 inches)
- Floor: R-19 above unheated areas (6 inches)
- Crawl Space Wall Insulation: R-10 with a vapor barrier (foam board)
- Duct Insulation: R-13 in unheated areas
- Rim Joist Insulation: R-13 (4 inches)

Windows

- Install storm windows to provide additional insulation and to reduce air leakage.
- Replace your old, leaky windows with new, energy-efficient double pane windows.

Ductwork and Air Distribution

- Insulate all uninsulated ductwork in unconditioned spaces (attics and crawl spaces).

Air Conditioning

- Replace your air conditioning unit with a new unit with a SEER rating of 14 or higher.

Heating

- Replace your furnace with a new unit with an AFUE rating of 95 percent or higher.

Water

- If your water heater is over 7 years old, consider replacing it with an energy-efficient model.

Appliances

- When replacing appliances, purchase Energy Star qualified models.