

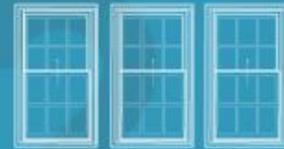


SAVING ENERGY *Saves Money*

Looking for ways to save energy and money at home? Check out the 8 things all homeowners should do to cost effectively lower their energy bills.



Install and set a programmable thermostat. Save an estimated 10 percent per year on heating and cooling costs by using a programmable thermostat.



Use sunlight to your advantage. Choose window treatments that allow you to use natural light while reducing heat loss and gain.



Switch to ENERGY STAR appliances, fans and electronics. Using ENERGY STAR certified products throughout your home could save nearly \$750 over the lifetime of the products.



Choose energy-saving lighting. Replacing 5 of your home's most frequently used lights with energy-efficient ENERGY STAR bulbs could save you \$75 a year in energy costs.



Use an electronic power strip for your electronic equipment. Help reduce phantom loads -- and save up to \$100 a year -- by plugging electronic devices into a power strip and turn it off when not in use.



Reduce energy for water heating. Take simple steps -- like lowering your water heater's temperature and installing low-flow showerheads -- to reduce your water heating bills.



Hire a professional to maintain your heating and cooling system. Check and replace your air filters regularly and arrange for annual maintenance with a qualified technician.



Consult a home performance contractor to achieve large savings. These professionals will do a comprehensive audit of your whole house using special tools to measure home energy efficiency.

AIR SEALING

Remember that space in your house that's the size of a bathroom window and constantly open? Using the reading from the blower door, an auditor can figure out just how much air is moving through that gap at any given time. This is usually the biggest source of energy loss in a home, and sealing those gaps is one of the quickest ways to make your home more comfortable and efficient. Reducing air flow can pay off in as little as five years. It is also the baseline by which all other energy efficiency upgrades are measured (the absolute energy savings will vary by your climate). Read more about air sealing.

RESET WATER HEATER THERMOSTAT

Most water heaters heat water to a set temperature and then hold it there. This means that all day and night, the water heater cycles on and off, just maintaining that set temperature. Lowering the setting a few degrees can often save half as much energy as air sealing would. And chances are turning down the temperature won't even be noticeable. Read more tips for efficient water heating.

PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT FOR HEATING SYSTEM

It seems obvious but just like the water heater maintains a set temperature even when it isn't being used, a thermostat does the same thing for the entire house. Just letting it cool off (or warm up) when there isn't anyone awake can save energy and money as well. Without sacrificing comfort, it can also be close to half of what air sealing would save you. This change usually pays for itself in about three years.

ATTIC AND WALL INSULATION

The greater the difference between the indoor and the outdoor temperatures, the more energy it will take to maintain a comfortable temperature in your home. Adding insulation between the indoors and the outdoors reduces that energy demand. Depending on where you live, the savings from insulating your walls and the attic could be almost double the savings of air sealing. This procedure also pays back in 3 1/2 to 12 years. Learn how to estimate the payback period of insulation.

REPLACE REFRIGERATOR

Much like a water heater, a refrigerator holds a set temperature that is very different from the air outside of it. It makes sense that a better sealed, better insulated refrigerator with better mechanical systems would save more energy. Depending on your previous model, a new ENERGY STAR® refrigerator can save up to \$150 per year. One way to test the seal on your refrigerator is to close a dollar bill in the door. If the bill drops when you close the door, you may want to consider fixing the seal or getting a new one. Depending on the refrigerator and the savings, this can pay for itself in 10 years -- well under the average lifespan of the appliance.

WATER HEATERS AND FURNACES

The savings from water heaters and furnaces depend a lot on where the house is and what the fuel is. Generally, natural gas is going to be much cheaper than electricity, provided it's available. The newer high efficiency gas furnaces will often be worth installing, even if the gas furnace in your home is relatively new. Depending on if you live in a cold climate or a warmer one, a new high efficiency furnace will rival or exceed air sealing for its potential savings. In warmer areas, a high efficiency heat pump may replace a gas furnace as the best choice for the home.