



ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR WINTER



1. Take Advantage of Heat from the Sun

Open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

2. Cover Drafty Windows

Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration. Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing. Find out about other window treatments and coverings that can improve energy efficiency.

3. Adjust the Temperature

When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills. A smart or programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature. If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.

4. Find and Seal Leaks

Seal the air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes ("plumbing penetrations"), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets. Find out how to detect air leaks. Learn more about air sealing new and existing homes. Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows. Find out how to select and apply the appropriate caulk and weatherstripping.

5. Maintain Your Heating Systems

Schedule service for your heating system. Furnaces and heat pumps: Replace your filter once a month or as needed. Find out more about maintaining furnaces or boilers and heat pumps. Wood- and Pellet-Burning Heaters: Clean the flue vent regularly and clean the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure that your home is heated efficiently. Find other maintenance recommendations for wood- and pellet-burning appliances.

6. Reduce Heat Loss from the Fireplace

Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney. When you use the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening dampers in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly--approximately 1 inch--and close doors leading into the room. Lower the thermostat setting to between 50° and 55°F. If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue. If you do use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.

Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible. Purchase grates made of C-shaped metal tubes to draw cool room air into the fireplace and circulate warm air back into the room. Add caulking around the fireplace hearth. Find out more techniques to improve your fireplace or wood-burning appliance's efficiency. Learn tips for safe and efficient fireplace installation and wood burning.

7. Lower Your Water Heating Costs

Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, you'll avoid scalding your hands. Find other strategies for energy-efficient water heating.

8. Lower Your Holiday Lighting Costs

Use light-emitting diode -- or "LED" -- holiday light strings to reduce the cost of decorating your home for the winter holidays. Learn about the advantages and potential cost savings of LED holiday light strings. Find manufacturers and brands of ENERGY STAR® certified decorative light strings.