

SAVE MONEY THIS WINTER

APPLY THESE GREAT ENERGY-SAVERS!

Cutting back on using unnecessary energy in the fall and winter months saves you money on your heating bills. However, energy efficiency doesn't have to mean big spending on the latest HVAC system or new windows. You'd be surprised how a few affordable changes can make a big impact on your bottom line. So before it gets cold, try these 10 easy-to-follow tips to reduce energy consumption and avoid waste.

REDUCE CONSUMPTION

➤ Reduce Hot Water Temperature:

Water heating is another great source for cutting costs. Set your water heater to the "normal" setting or 120 degrees. If you haven't done so, you're looking at a 7-11% reduction in water heating costs.

➤ Replace or Clean Furnace Filters:

Dirty filters restrict airflow and increase energy use. Keeping your furnace clean, lubricated and properly adjusted will reduce energy use, saving up to 5% of heating costs.

➤ Install a Programmable Thermostat

If you don't have one yet, you'll want to get one. Why? Programmable thermostats, which allow you to select day and night temperatures, can save up to 15% on energy costs — a big return for a small investment. Oh, and when you install one, don't forget to program it!

➤ Don't Turn Your Thermostat Off When You're Away:

Logically, of course, turning the heat off makes sense — BUT don't do it. This well-intentioned mistake has consequences. Turning on a cold system uses more energy to bring a home into a comfortable range than simply moving the thermostat down a few degrees for while you're away.

➤ Set Your Temperature to 68 Degrees:

Now you know the optimum temperature for setting your thermostat, here's a good reason to remember it. For every degree lowered in the 60-to-70-degree heating range you'll save an easy 5% in your heating costs. So, just a 2-degree decrease, from 70 to 68 degrees, rounds up to a nice 10% cut in your energy expenses. Not bad!

AVOID WASTE — SEAL UP THE LEAKS

➤ Increase Ceiling Insulation:

Want a quick 5-25% reduction in heating loss? Look above you — if your ceiling is uninsulated or scantily done so, it's costing you money. For best results, consider increasing your insulation to up to R-38.

➤ Seal Ducts:

Another often overlooked energy-waster is leaking ductwork, which can account for more than 25-30% of heating costs in some homes! If you're comfortable doing a little DIY, check the tightness of ducts and be sure to plug any visible open spots with insulation material. Alternatively, consider hiring a contractor to perform this work.

➤ Plug Door and Outlet Leaks:

Check your doors and windows — they could be responsible for up to 10% of your energy costs being wasted. You can fix this by installing weather-stripping or caulk around leaky doors and windows.

➤ Install Low Flow Showerheads:

If you do not already have them, you could be missing out on lowering your heating costs by 10-16% — another big one. Low-flow showerheads and faucets are your ideal choice for a great money-saver.

➤ Wrap the Hot Water Tank with Jacket Insulation:

Older water heaters tend to have little insulation, and this simple fix can save up to 10% on water heating costs. However, be sure to leave the air intake vent uncovered when insulating a gas water heater.