

12 Tips to Lower Your Heating Bill

Reducing home energy use is good for several reasons. First and foremost, it keeps money in your pocket; but it also lightens the load on local power grids and the environment — a win-win all around.

Try some or all of the 12 tips below to save on your energy bill while staying cozy and comfortable in your home. They're easier than you think!

1. Let the Sun Shine In

Use the sun's rays (bonus: they're free!) to your advantage! Open curtains and blinds on your south-facing windows during the day to let heat in, and then close curtains at sunset to keep it in.

2. Leak-Proof Your Home

Inspect your home for energy leaks (get tips on detecting air leaks from energy.gov), which can wreak havoc on your energy bill. Use weather stripping and caulking to seal leaks and keep warm air inside. For [windows](#) you rarely use during winter, get plastic window kits to further leak-proof.

3. Bump the Temp Down

Just by setting your thermostat a few degrees lower, you can immediately begin saving. Consider installing a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature for even more energy-efficiency.

4. Pay Attention to Your Hot Water Heater

Water heaters account for about [17%](#) of a home's energy use – adding up to about [\\$400-600](#) per year for the average household. Bring that percentage down by:

- Using less hot water
- Setting your water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees F.
- Buying an energy star rated heater when it comes time to replace it
- Fixing leaks
- Washing clothes in cold water
- Installing low-flow showerheads and faucets

5. Check the Fireplace

When not burning a fire, keep the damper closed. Consider installing tempered glass doors and an air exchange system that blows warm air back into the room. Check the seal on the flue damper and make sure it's tightly sealed. Finally, add caulking around the hearth. If you never use your [fireplace](#), plug and seal the flue.

6. Maintain Your Heating System

Have a professional check and tune-up your heat pump or [furnace](#) once a year. This could lead to big savings. Make sure they also replace any clogged filters, which can make your furnace work harder, thereby raising energy costs (you can also check and replace filters yourself).

7. Close Unused Vents

If you have rooms that are rarely used, fully or partially close the vents to redirect heat to other rooms.

8. Use Ceiling Fans

Everyone knows heat rises, which means the air you've paid to heat rises and collects at the top of rooms. This can be especially costly in homes with high ceilings. Use your ceiling fans to push warm air downward – just make sure they're set to run in a *clockwise direction*.

9. Check Your Attic Insulation

If your attic doesn't have at least 11 inches of insulation, you'll most likely lose heat through the upper level of your home. Learn online how to install insulation yourself, or get bids from local contractors to do it for you.

10. Recycle Hot Air

After cooking, leave the oven door open a crack to let the heat help warm the house. Bonus? You get to savor the delicious smell of those cookies, baked goods, or dinner a little longer.

11. Use Space Heaters in a Safe Manner

Portable heaters are a good cost-saving option if you and your family are hanging out in one room for any length of time, or if you're the only one home and are stationary (like working in a home office). But remember to use [caution whenever using space heaters](#): according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, these heaters cause more than [25,000](#) residential fires per year. Follow the heater instructions carefully and always unplug them when not in use.

12. Bundle Up

Sweaters, socks, and cozy blankets really do make a difference.

By making a few tweaks in your home and modifying some behaviors, you'll begin to see cost and energy savings in no time.

As the transition from winter to spring and summer occurs, check out our companion piece on [lowering your cooling costs](#).

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