



Tips and Tricks To Save Energy for Do-It Yourselfers



Walkin' the Talk to reduce our carbon footprint and create smart energy solutions.

Easy

- Heating is the biggest energy hog. In the winter for every degree you set the thermostat down for an 8-hour period (i.e. when you are asleep), you save about 1% of your heating costs. Turn it up in summer.
- Close off rooms that are not in use & turn down the heat to them.
- Close closet doors. You don't need to heat that space!
- Clean and replace furnace filters regularly and schedule a furnace "tune up" yearly.
- The hot water heater is the 2nd biggest energy hog in your house. Turn the temperature on your hot water heater down a degree or two. Should be around 110 ° to 120° & don't run hot water needlessly.
- Install "low-flow" adaptors on faucets.
- Get some foam insulation to wrap around exposed hot water pipes.
- Insulate your hot water heater (there are jackets you can buy.)
- Turn off lights, TV, computers, etc. when not in use. Laptops are far more energy efficient than desktop computers.
- Use "Smart Strips" for plugging in your electronic gadgets. When not in use, the strip automatically turns off power to them.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with new energy-saving bulbs. Prices are coming down and quality is going up.
- Add foam inserts/gaskets behind switch & outlet covers on exterior walls.
- During the winter, close curtains or shades at night.
- Wash clothes in cold water. Wash & dry full loads. Clean dryer lint filter regularly or (better yet) hang clothes outside when you can.
- Only run a dishwasher when it is full and turn off the "Heat dry" function if you can.
- Use microwaves and crock-pots whenever possible. They use less energy than a stove.
- Vacuum refrigerator condenser coils at least once a year. Make sure temperature is between 37° and 40 ° for fresh food and 0 for freezer.
- Get rid of the extra fridge. It's probably old and saps at least \$200 of electricity per year.
- If you have a fireplace, when you are not using it, close the damper.

A Little Harder

- Install weather-stripping around opening doors and windows.
- Caulk around window and door frames and around any pipes, ductwork or other penetrations through exterior walls.

- Insulate and weather-strip doors or hatches to an unheated attic.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Make interior storm windows for your house. These are lightweight wood frames with a double layer of heat-shrink film wrapped around them that are custom made to fit tightly over your windows. (Directions available).
- Make (or have someone make) insulated curtains or shades for windows. The tighter they fit the space, the better. Cellular shades are also good insulators but not compatible with interior storm windows.
- If you have a fireplace that you use, consider glass doors that can be kept shut when not in use to keep heated air from escaping up the chimney.
- If you NEVER use your fireplace, consider closing off the chimney.
- Replace old appliances with new, more energy-efficient Energy Star appliances.
- Install a ceiling fan. In winter run it at low speed in a clockwise direction to push warm air down. This will allow you to lower your thermostat and save up to \$100 per year on heating bills.
- Seal all air leaks. Common places are behind kneewalls, the attic hatch, around wiring holes, plumbing vents, open soffits, recessed lights, furnace flue or duct chaseways (the hollow box or wall feature that hides ducts), basement rim joists (where the foundation meets the wood framing), & windows and doors.

The EPA has an excellent guide called: ***Do-It-Yourself Guide to Sealing and Insulating with Energy Star: Sealing air leaks and adding attic insulation.*** If you would like to learn how to find and seal hidden attic and basement air leaks, determine if your attic insulation is adequate, and how to add more attic insulation safely and reduce energy bills, this is definitely worth looking at.

https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_sealing.hm_improvement_seal_insulate

IMPORTANT !

You will probably need to hire a contractor if you find any of these conditions:

- Wet or damp insulation, moldy or rotted rafters or joists, or a history of ice dams and large icicles at the edge of your roof in the winter.(all indicators of serious moisture leaks)
- Vents that exhaust moist air directly into the attic space instead of outdoors.
- Knob and tube electrical wiring (pre 1930's)

Efficiency Maine lists certified contractors in your area:

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_sealing.hm_improvement_seal_insulate



For more information contact

Sierra Club Maine

44 Oak Street, Portland ME 04101

maine.chapter@sierraclub.org (207) 761-5616