

TOP 10 WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON WINTER HEATING BILLS

1. Seal ductwork.

- This is the number one way to conserve energy. Make sure that all ductwork is sealed at joints and intersections with duct sealer or silicone caulking. Otherwise, ductwork can leak heated air into the attic or crawl space, and outside air can be drawn into the return ductwork, increasing costs and reducing comfort dramatically. Ducts can be sealed using foil-backed tape or silicon caulking. Sealing and insulating ducts and pipes could reduce fuel usage from 2 to 15%.

2. Seal air leaks.

- Seal all holes from pipes and wires that enter/exit the living space. This includes entrances, pull-downs and attic stair openings, light fixtures, pipes, and wires. Attic entryways should be weather stripped and insulated.
- Caulk cracks between window frames or door frames and walls, both inside and outside the home. Press putty into smaller cracks seal larger crevices with a caulking gun.
- Seal cracks in chimney and foundation bricks and mortar. Caulk where foundation bricks meet the house siding.

3. Seal off wood-burning fireplaces.

- Never use a wood-burning fireplace as a heat source for your home. Even as a supplemental heat source, the cold air introduced to a warm home through an open flue isn't as efficient as sealing off a fireplace and using the primary source of heat. For natural gas fireplaces, follow the manufacturer's instructions to turn off the pilot light when not in use.

4. Lower the thermostat.

- It's one of the simplest way to save money! In the winter, set the thermostat between 65 and 70 degrees during the day and to 58 degrees at night or when away from home for several hours. Setting the thermostat back at night for a period of eight hours or more will reduce the heating consumption by approximately 1% for each degree below the daytime setting.

5. Lower water heater to 120-125 degrees.

- Many water heaters are automatically set at 140 degrees. Lowering the temperature on your water heater to between 120 and 125 degrees will reduce the amount of fuel needed to heat the water, while still providing the hot water that you need.

6. Change furnace filters every month

- This is the number one reason for furnace breakdowns. Inspect heating and cooling equipment annually, or as recommended by the manufacturer. Have a professional check, clean, and tune-up furnaces once a year.
- Check furnace air filters once a month during the heating season. If they become clogged, clean or replace with new filters and save 2 to 5% in fuel costs.
- When it is time to replace the natural gas furnace, consider a new high efficiency gas furnace. New gas heating systems are as much as 30% more energy efficient.

7. Weather-strip doors and windows.

- Inspect windows and doors for air leaks. If you can see daylight around a door or window frame, then the door or window needs sealing. Air leaks can be sealed with caulking or weather-stripping.
- Make sure the garage door has a reasonably tight seal around the bottom edge. Remember to weather-strip around doors that lead to the attic and garage. Caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows could reduce fuel usage by as much as 7 to 10%.

8. Add insulation.

- You should insulate the first 3 to 6 feet of cold and hot water pipes near the water heater. Insulating all hot water pipes is not necessary where pipes are located in a crawlspace or attic.
- Wrapping the water heater with an insulation blanket can save heating money by slowing the drop in temperature from the hot water tank as it sits unused. Inexpensive insulation kits are available at most home improvement stores.
- When adding insulation to the attic, start at the top and work down only after eliminating air infiltration. Any insulation will help reduce heat loss, but adequate insulation in the ceiling is most important. Ceiling insulation and attic vents could reduce fuel usage by up to 20 to 30 percent.

9. Make small changes inside your home.

- On sunny days, open shades, draperies and blinds to let the sun help to heat the home. Close blinds and draperies block radiators or heating ducts. Fuel consumption could be reduced by 3 to 7%.
- Close the vents/registers and doors in unused rooms and save up to 8% of the heat.

- Install a humidifier. It will keep the home at the proper humidity level and keep everyone comfortable at lower temperatures.
- If the house has radiators, vacuum all surfaces including hard-to-reach areas once a month.
- Arrange furniture with the heating system in mind. Don't restrict air flow from registers or cold air returns. Position furniture away from drafts.

10. Do not open and close outside doors needlessly.

- Reduced traffic means a warmer, draft-free home.



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