



10 Low-Cost/No-Cost Ways to Save Money on Winter Heating Bills

1. Seal duct work.

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 caulk. Otherwise, supply 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.

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.

3. Seal off fireplaces.

Never use a 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, turn off the pilot light when not in use. Seal off the fireplace area or the flue area to prevent cold air from leaking in.

4. Lower thermostat.

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. Keeping the temperatures at 70 degrees is recommended for homes where there are elderly or infants.

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.

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 and clean furnaces once a year.

7. Weatherstrip 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.

8. Insulate water pipes coming from the water heater.

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.

9. Add an insulation blanket to water heater.

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.

10. Add insulation to attic.

When adding insulation, start at the top and work down only after eliminating air infiltration.

For a brochure discussing many of these tips titled "Energy Efficiency Pays," visit:
<http://www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/info/documents/pdfs/26290.pdf>