



National Home Performance Council

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Energy Efficiency Home Buyer/Owner Tips

- Did you know that your home can be a greater source of pollution than your car? According to [ENERGY STAR](#), 16% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are generated from the energy used in houses nationwide.
- A recent [study](#) found that around 20% of the energy used in our homes is wasted in one form or another. As much as half of the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling, so implementing [heating solutions](#) to increase the efficiency of your home's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system can greatly reduce energy waste.
- [Air sealing and insulating](#) the “envelope” or “shell” of your home — its outer walls, ceiling, windows, doors, and floors — is often the most cost effective way to improve energy efficiency and comfort. You can save up to 20% on your home heating and cooling costs (or up to 10% on your total annual energy bill) by sealing and insulating, and you can do it yourself with [guidance from ENERGY STAR](#).
- There a number of other DIY ways to increase the energy efficiency of your home and reduce your monthly energy bills. Here are just a few:
 - ◆ Change your air filter regularly: Check your filter every month, especially during heavy use months (winter and summer). If the filter looks dirty after a month, change it. At a minimum, change the filter every three (3) months. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder to keep you warm or cool – wasting energy.
 - ◆ Tune up your HVAC equipment yearly: Just as a tune-up for your car can improve your gas mileage, a yearly tune-up of your heating and cooling system can improve efficiency and comfort. Learn more from ENERGY STAR’s [Maintain Your Equipment: A Checklist](#).
 - ◆ Install a programmable thermostat: A [programmable thermostat](#) is ideal for people who are away from home during set periods of time throughout the week. Through proper use of pre-programmed settings, a programmable thermostat can save you about \$180 every year in energy costs.
 - ◆ Consider investing in energy-efficient windows at home to save money and increase indoor comfort. The [Efficient Windows Collaborative](#) provides consumers with information on [improving or replacing windows in existing homes](#) as well as guidance on [selecting efficient windows for new homes](#).



- ◆ Look for the [ENERGY STAR](#) label on home appliances and products. ENERGY STAR products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Only have a few minutes? Here are some quick and easy ways to save money around the house:
 - ◆ Turn your thermostat down 10 to 15 percent for eight hours a day – it can save as much as 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills.
 - ◆ Lower the thermostat on your hot water heater by 10 degrees; it can save 3 to 5 percent in energy costs each year.
 - ◆ Your refrigerator is always plugged in and accounts for almost 8 percent of your home's electricity bill. To reduce energy bills and extend its life, keep your refrigerator's coils clean.
 - ◆ Shift energy-intensive household chores such as laundry and dishwashing to off-peak hours — nights, mornings, weekends. There's less strain on the power grid during those hours so you'll save money and be green.
 - ◆ Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use (TVs and DVDs in standby mode still use several watts of power).
 - ◆ Turn off everything that's not in use — lights, TVs, computers, electronics — to instantly save energy. Get your family members and coworkers on board, too!
 - ◆ Activate “sleep” features on computers, copiers and other machines that power down when the equipment is on but not in use.
 - ◆ Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights. This will save you almost \$60 in electricity costs over the lifetime of each bulb and they'll last up to 10 times longer.
- Looking for more DIY ways to save? The Department of Energy's [Energy Savers Booklet](#) and the Alliance to Save Energy's [Living Efficiently Project](#) provide many more easy low-cost and no-cost ways to save energy.
- Some energy saving measures should be implemented by certified contractors. Visit the ENERGY STAR website to learn more about [hiring a contractor](#).
- Many home improvements and upgrades will result in tax credits that save you money and reduce your energy consumption at home and on the road – check to see if you're eligible. [Learn more about tax credits](#).



- Many local governments and utility companies offer free home energy audits and numerous opportunities for rebates, loans and other ways to defray upfront costs of home performance upgrades. [Learn more about the incentives offered near you!](#)
- Buying a new home? Compared with standard homes, ENERGY STAR qualified homes use substantially less energy for heating, cooling, and water heating-delivering \$200 to \$400 in annual savings. To earn the ENERGY STAR, a home must meet strict guidelines for energy efficiency set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These homes are at least 15% more energy efficient than homes built to the 2004 International Residential Code (IRC), and include additional energy-saving features that typically make them 20–30% more efficient than standard homes. Over the average 7 to 8 years you may live in your home, this adds up to thousands of dollars saved on utility bills. [Learn more about ENERGY STAR Qualified New Homes.](#)