



Home Tips



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • DECEMBER 2012 •

Q & A

How To Reduce Heating Bills

What are some of the things we can do to reduce our heating bills this winter?

Get expert recommendations

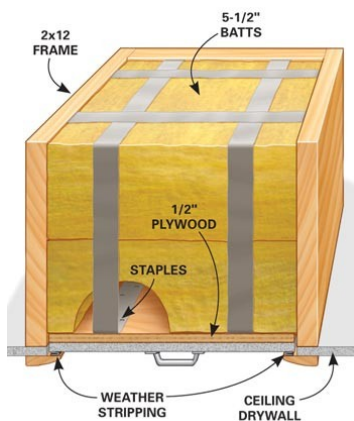
An energy audit includes a series of tests, including the blower door pressure test (shown), that tell you the efficiency of your heating and cooling system and the overall efficiency of your home. On the basis of the test results, the auditor will recommend low-cost improvements to save energy and larger upgrades that will pay you back within five to seven years. Audits take two to three hours and cost \$250 to \$400, but if you set one up through your utility company, you may be eligible for a rebate.



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Check your attic insulation level

Blown insulation should be between 12 and 13 inches thick for R30. If you have fiberglass batt (rolled insulation) the R rating should be on the paper backing. If there is no paper backing, the insulation thickness should be 9 1/4 inches thick. The long-term payoff is impressive, too. You could see your energy bills go down by as much as 15 to 25 percent, depending on your existing levels of insulation. And you may also qualify for a tax credit on the cost of the insulation (check with the IRS or at www.energystar.gov).



Insulate the attic access

The attic access door is the largest source of heat gain and heat loss in the entire house. If you have a pull down stair, install a foam box over the entire stair and add R30 fiberglass batt over the box. If you have a scuttle hole, insulate over the

cover. Add weather-stripping around the opening to seal air flow.

Use foam gaskets to seal electrical boxes

According to energy experts, electrical boxes that hold switches or outlets are major sources of heat loss. Foam gaskets (\$3 for a pack of 12 at home centers) won't completely seal the boxes, but they'll help. They're quick to install—just take off the cover plate, stick the gasket over the box, then put the plate back on.



Use silicone caulk and foil tape

Sealing leaky joints in heating ducts is easy, cheap, and can



reduce your energy costs by hundreds of dollars a year. Simply buy aluminum-colored silicone caulk and caulk every joint in rectangular ductwork (clean the joints first with a household spray cleaner and a rag to remove dust). Use the caulk to seal around the take-off boots to each branch run. Buy high-temperature UL181

aluminum foil tape in the duct section of a home center and use that to seal the joints of round ductwork.

Use airtight fireplace doors

Wood-burning fireplaces can warm up a room, but more often, they rob a house of heat by letting it escape up the chimney. If you have a modern fireplace with a cold air intake from outside, make sure you equip it with an airtight door. If you have an older fireplace that uses room air for combustion, equip it with a door that has operable vents. And only keep those vents open when you have a fire in the fireplace. Otherwise, heat will constantly be sucked out of the house.



Wrap pipes with insulation

Insulating your exposed hot water pipes reduces heat loss and helps deliver hotter water at a lower temperature setting. Insulate all accessible hot water pipes within 3 feet of your water heater using quality pipe insulation or a pipe sleeve. Place the pipe sleeve so the seam is face down on the pipe and use aluminum foil tape to secure the insulation to the pipe every foot or so. On gas water heaters, keep pipe insulation at least 6 inches from the flue.



Seal sill plates and rim joists

Sill plates and rim joists are usually poorly insulated (if at all) and very leaky. So if you have an unfinished basement, grab some silicone or acrylic latex caulk to seal the sill plate. If you simply have fiberglass insulation stuffed against the rim joist, pull it out. Run a bead of caulk between the edge of the sill

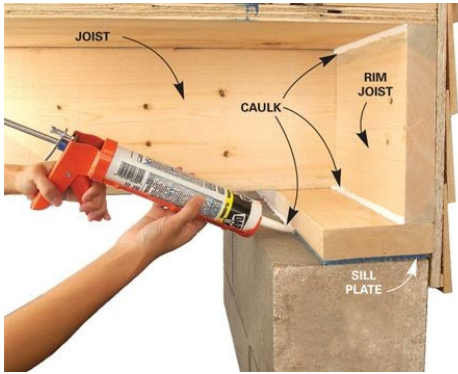


plate and the top of the foundation wall. Use expanding spray foam anywhere there are gaps larger than 1/4 in. between the sill and the foundation.

Cut heat loss with storm windows

Storm windows aren't new, but they're definitely improved. New ones open and close and can be left on year-round. Some offer low-emissivity coatings to further cut heat loss. You can use low-e versions even if your windows already have a low-e coating. You'll see the biggest payback when they're used over single-pane windows. But don't use storm windows over aluminum windows—heat buildup between the two windows can damage the aluminum, and drilling holes for installation can cause leaks.



Source: The Family Handyman

<http://www.familyhandyman.com/DIY-Projects/Saving-Money/Energy-Efficiency/expert-energy-saving-tips>

Quote Of The Month

"Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall."

Larry Wilde



Merry Christmas

From

Kim, Angie, Erin, Mary, Stacie, Paul & Rod