

Energy Efficiency Tips

To Make Your Home (& Your Wallet) More Comfortable

Most Americans are just like you — they use natural gas heat to warm their homes and families. Using energy wisely and taking the time to just check little things will make a big difference in how much natural gas you use and how much you spend on your natural gas bill. Below are a few tips to help you plan how to conserve energy and save money.

Keep The Cold Out

Consumers can take easy, inexpensive steps to reduce household energy consumption and minimize energy loss. Reducing air leaks could cut as much as 10 percent from an average household's monthly energy bill. For example, consumers can:

- Seal leaks around doors, windows, and other openings such as pipes or ducts, with caulk or weather-stripping. The most common places where air escapes in homes are:

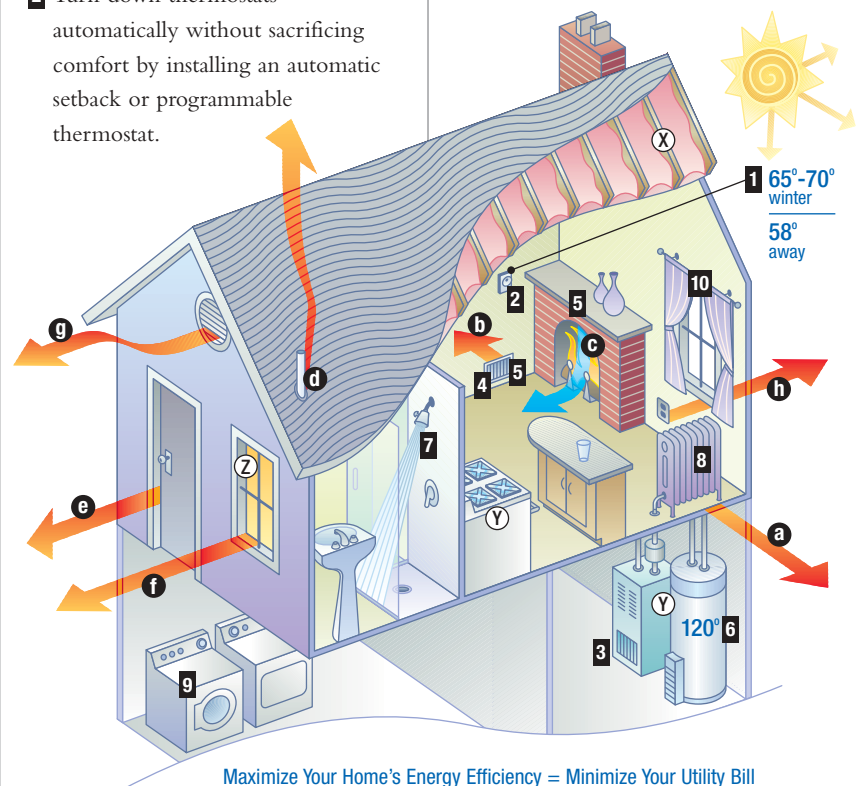
- a** floors, walls, ceilings
- b** ducts
- c** fireplace
- d** plumbing penetrations
- e** doors
- f** windows
- g** fans and vents
- h** electric outlets

Use Energy Wisely

- 1** Set thermostats between 65 and 70 degrees during the winter, and at 58 degrees when away from the house for more than a few hours. While sleeping, add an extra blanket for warmth. Bear in mind that warmer temperatures are recommended for homes with ill or elderly persons or infants.
- 2** Turn down thermostats automatically without sacrificing comfort by installing an automatic setback or programmable thermostat.

SAVINGS: Cut annual heating bills by as much as 10 percent per year by turning your thermostat back 10 percent to 15 percent for eight hours per day.

- 3** Change or clean furnace filters once a month during the heating season. Furnaces consume less energy if they “breathe” more easily. Use receipt of your natural gas bill as a reminder.



Maximize Your Home's Energy Efficiency = Minimize Your Utility Bill

- 4** Warm air rises, so use registers to direct warm air-flow across the floor.
- 5** Close vents and doors in unused rooms and close dampers on unused fireplaces.
- 6** Set water heater temperatures at 120 degrees. A family of four, each showering for five minutes a day, uses 700 gallons of water each week. By lowering the thermostat on the water heater to 120 degrees, families can cut water heating bills without sacrificing comfort.
SAVINGS: Turning down the unit's thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save money, since water-heating is a typical family's third-largest energy expense, accounting for about 14 percent of utility bills.
- 7** Install water-flow restrictors in showerheads and faucets.
- 8** If radiators are located near cold walls, place a sheet of aluminum foil between the radiator and the wall to reflect heat back into the room.

- 9** Run washing machines and clothes dryers with a full load.
- 10** On sunny days, open draperies and blinds to let the sun's warmth in. Close them at night to insulate against cold air outside.

Plan for Long-Term Energy-Efficiency Improvements

- ⊗ Check to see if attic and basement have the recommended levels of insulation.
- Ⓜ Check the heating system and replace old, outdated appliances with high-efficiency natural gas models. When buying new appliances, compare energy efficiency ratings and annual operating costs.
- Ⓩ Install storm or thermal windows and doors or double-paned glass. A less expensive alternative is plastic sheeting, which can be temporarily fastened over doors and windows to prevent drafts and retain heat.

Sources for Further Information on Using Energy Wisely

For information on forecasted energy prices, detailed home energy conservation strategies, and energy-efficient home improvement materials, these websites can help utilities and their customers to prepare for this winter.

www.ase.org: The Alliance to Save Energy has posted some tips on its web site to help consumers avoid “\$ticker \$hock” this winter.

www.aga.org: The American Gas Association website is a valuable resource for understanding the benefits and availability of clean, safe, reliable natural gas.



Bill-Payment Programs

Most natural gas utilities offer billing arrangements or assistance programs designed to help consumers manage their energy bills. Contact us for more information.

Special Assistance for Low-Income Households

We care about our low income customers, and if you will have problems paying your bills for the next heating season, please contact us for personal assistance.

For additional information on general energy conservation tips, go to the website of the Department of Energy at **www.energysavers.com.**

