

How to save energy and lower energy bills

Either add layers or take them off. Instead of reaching for the heat in the winter or A/C switch in the summer, regulate your temp by wearing layers. Wearing appropriate layers can save you \$250 per year and saves 1,000 lbs. of CO2 per person, per year.

Also get a programmable thermostat and save as much as \$150 per year. In the winter make sure you turn it way down during the day and in the summer way up when no one is home. If it's programmable, you can set it to the temperature you want right before you come home.

Green Tip of the Week... **Winterizing on a Budget 2008**

Everyone knows that winterizing your home can slash your heating costs and reduce global warming pollution, but many people probably think that this is not the time to make home improvements given our present economy. However, the following projects can reduce your home's energy use and deliver the quickest payback on your purchase. This in turn will end up saving you money while helping the planet.

- **Insulate your attic.** It is relatively easy, yet very cost-effective, to add insulation to your attic. I did these two years ago and my house has been a lot warmer.
- **Seal air leaks.** Weather stripping, door sweeps, window shrink wrap, and other materials can be purchased at your local hardware store for \$50 or less, and can save you as much as 10 percent in energy costs. If you have an old fireplace, consider installing glass doors (which can cost a couple hundred dollars or more) to help prevent heat from escaping out the chimney when not in use.
- **Seal heating ducts.** Leaky ducts from forced-air or heat pump systems can allow up to 20 percent of the warm air to escape. While most ductwork is hidden in walls and floors, you can seal duct leaks on your own in attics, basements, or garages, and in areas where ducts meet floor or wall vents.

The DOE estimates that sealing leaky ducts can save you up to \$140 annually.

- **Install a programmable thermostat.** An Energy Star-qualified programmable thermostat can cost as little as \$30 but save you \$100 or more each year on heating costs by automatically turning the heat down when you are asleep or away (so you don't have to remember to do it yourself).
- **Upgrade your furnace.** If your heating system is more than 10 years old, consider replacing it with an Energy Star-rated model to cut your energy costs by up to 30 percent. Before you buy, make your home as efficient as possible first (following the tips above) so you can purchase the smallest system to fit your heating needs.