

10 tips to help you reduce heating costs!

If you want to reduce heating costs, you might be worrying that it will require a lot of big changes. But it's quite possible to achieve some amazing results simply by doing a few odd jobs, changing certain lifestyle habits, or adopting new ones. When it comes to reducing heating costs, every little bit helps! And as heating represents 60% of a home's energy consumption, you have a lot to gain by making these few small changes.

1) Install a programmable thermostat to better control room temperatures in your home. A timer in these devices lets you adjust the temperature to rise and fall according to your sleep cycle and lifestyle.

2) Don't overheat rooms. Keep the house temperature at about 20°C, and lower the temperature by 3°C at night or when you're away for a few hours. And if you turn down the heat before you leave for work, you'll see a substantial energy savings on your next bill; a decrease of three degrees over a period of eight hours reduces heating costs by up to 4.5 per cent.

3) Check the insulation in your home. It isn't necessary to undertake major renovations to reduce heat loss. Repair cracks, install weather stripping along doors and windows and use vents to close the exhaust ducts of the range hood and dryer.

4) Opt for fabric curtains. When you close them at night, you'll benefit from an extra layer of insulation.

5) Use ceiling fans to increase warm air circulation. Set the fan to turn in a clockwise direction and at the slowest speed.

6) Clean light bulbs, baseboard heaters and heating vents regularly. Dust makes them less efficient.

7) Have your natural gas or oil heating system inspected at least once a year. Poor maintenance can actually increase your energy bills. Also, avoid placing furniture in front of baseboard heaters or forced air outlets.

8) Replace your faucets and shower head with low-flow models. According to Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency, water heating accounts for 20 per cent of a home's energy costs. Using less hot water is a good way to reduce heating costs.

9) Wash your clothes in cold water.

10) Take a ten-minute shower (or less) instead of a bath. If you're really courageous and determined to reduce your heating costs, turn off the water while you soap up and shampoo your hair.