



# Home Tips®



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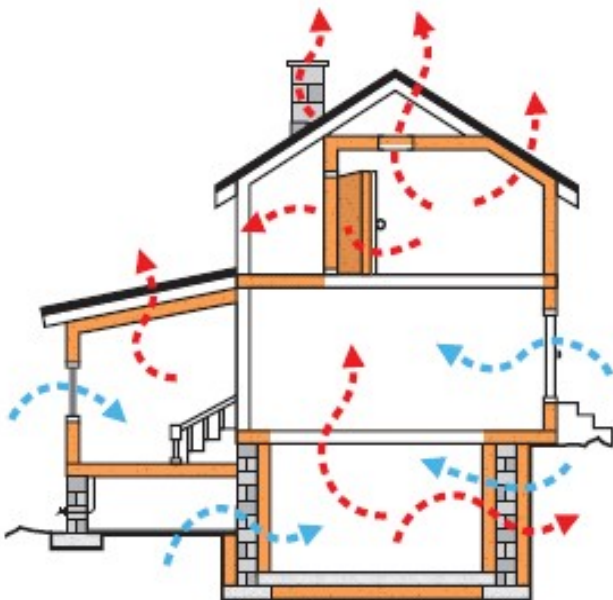
## Energy Saving Tips?

*Our utility bills keep going up. Do you have any recommendations on energy conservation that we can do ourselves?*

With utility cost rising every year, most people are searching for ways to save energy cost. First, it is helpful to conserve energy by not using so much. The most useful measure is to install a programmable thermostat. About half of your energy cost goes to heating and cooling. This will reduce your energy consumption while you are away from your house or at night when you are sleeping. Most of the time, you never even notice the reduction. Second is lowering your thermostat in the winter and raising it in the summer. This you may notice, but it will help with the utility bills. Also, consider closing window curtains or blinds where the sun beams in during hot summer days. You may also find it helpful to add reflective films to the windows and glass doors to reflect the heat of the sun during the hot summer.

## 5 WAYS TO LOSE ENERGY

Next, it is helpful to know the different ways your home



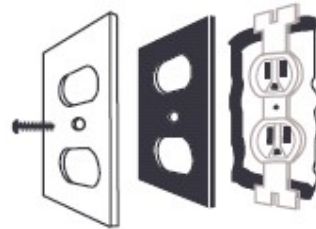
loses energy and what can be done to limit the loss.

### AIR LEAKS 35%

The largest source of energy loss is through air leaks throughout the house. This is the equivalent of leaving some

of the windows open and watching your hard earned dollars fly out. Sealing the openings is one of the most cost effective ways to save energy.

In most homes you can feel drafts around doors, windows, electrical switches and receptacles. Make sure all of the weather-stripping is in good condition, especially under the doors. The weather-stripping will eventually wear out and need to be replaced. Check for leaks around doors by closing them and look on the inside to see if you can see any daylight where the weather-stripping is supposed to seal. If you are really serious about sealing the leaks, you can remove door and window trim. Fill the gaps between the frames with a non-expandable foam sealer found at Home Depot or Lowes. If you use the “expandable” type, the foam will swell and the doors and windows will not longer open or close. You can use the same non-expandable foam to seal around the electrical boxes that hold the switches and receptacles. You want to cut off the air that enters between the gap of the electrical boxes



and the drywall. Be sure to not fill the boxes themselves. You can also purchase foam gaskets at home centers and hardware stores. They are easier to install than the foam insulation and work almost as well. Another

recommendation is to fill the gaps around everything that penetrates the basement ceiling, crawl space ceiling or the attic floor. In the attic, you will need to pull back the insulation to access the different areas. What you are looking for is any openings around pipes, wires, ducts and wood framing. You can seal the openings with expandable foam or fiberglass batt insulation. Be careful around the furnace, water heater or fireplace vent pipes. These pipe get very hot. Make sure you seal them with a non-combustible material. Some attics have open chases from the floor below. You can use foam sheathing to install between the ceiling joist to seal the openings. Then insulate over the sheathing.

Studies have shown that an average furnace duct system loses 10 to 40 percent of the conditioned air through gaps in the duct joints. The energy is wasted in unconditioned areas. This was not a requirement in older homes but is required in all new construction. By sealing each end of each duct with either duct tape or mastic, you will reduce the energy loss.

### WINDOWS & DOORS 18%

If you have the old single pane double hung wood windows, you can feel the heat or cold pass through the glass. To replace the windows is probably the most expensive way to save energy. Purchasing double pane windows with low-E coatings will be very expensive, and the payback will take ten

