



Keep Your Home Warm Everyday Low-Cost Strategies



Living Areas

Set the direction of ceiling fans for proper circulation.	Run ceiling fans in a <i>clockwise</i> direction during cold-weather months to move the warm air that gathers near ceilings back into the rooms.
Warm up your bed.	Turn down your thermostat and use extra blankets or quilts—or an electric blanket or mattress pad—to stay toasty at night.
Vacuum baseboard heaters, air registers, or radiators.	When you see dust, dirt, and lint building up, clean any of these devices that are part of your home’s heating system.
Move furniture or window coverings that are blocking air register, baseboard heaters, or radiators.	Make sure all the heated air you’re paying for reaches its destination! A blocked air register can cause an adjoining room to overheat, and upholstery or curtains can trap heat between the wall and the fabric—preventing it from being distributed throughout a room.
Install radiator reflectors.	These panels will help reflect heat away from walls and into rooms.
Isolate unused rooms, as long as doing so will not hurt water pipes.	Turn down the thermostat in a room with baseboard heat, or close the registers for a forced-air furnace. However, don’t allow temperatures in rooms with water pipes to approach the freezing point.
Remove wall or window air conditioners during cold-weather months.	For a <i>wall unit</i> , cover the opening with a thick plywood panel backed by rigid foam insulation; caulk to ensure the unit is weather-tight. For a <i>window unit</i> , remove it, close the window, and fix air leaks. If you can’t remove the air conditioner, wrap it in an insulated, waterproof cover made for the job.
Remove excess humidity from the kitchen and bathroom with a properly sized exhaust fan and only when necessary.	Too much humidity can cause condensation and frost on windows and possibly damage them. On the other hand, moisture from cooking and bathing helps humidify your house—making it more comfortable in the winter. But don’t leave an exhaust fan on longer—or at higher speed—than necessary. In one hour, an exhaust fan can blow a “houseful” of heated air outside. In addition make sure these fans are not discharging air and moisture into the attic; they should be vented outdoors.
Let the sun shine through the windows on the south side of your house.	Trim trees and bushes to maximize solar gain. Keep draperies, shades, and blinds open on sunny winter days. Closed drapes also double as insulators at night or on very cold days.

Throughout the House

Have a professional tune up your heating system and change filters regularly.	Have your heating system serviced once a year so it runs properly and efficiently. Dirty furnace filters make a system work harder and use more energy than necessary.
Close unused chimney damper.	Closing a damper prevents warm air escaping.
Seal leaks up.	Use weather stripping and caulk to seal air leaks and block drafts, even in the basement and attic, around doors, windows, chimneys, electrical outlets, and other potential areas for air leakage.
Set thermostat regularly or install a programmable model.	Keep your thermostat at 68° F or lower in the winter to save money and lower it when you are asleep or away. You can save with a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature when you're asleep or away.
Wrap windows and unused doors.	Put clear plastic sheets over the inside or outside of your windows to reduce heat loss and increase comfort. Window wrap kits, available at your hardware or home store, are an ideal choice for the job.
Make sure attic is adequately ventilated.	Moisture can build up and settle into insulation—then it freezes, but when it thaws it damages the ceiling and walls in the living space below.
Vent clothes dryer outdoors.	Too much humidity can cause condensation and frost on windows and possibly damage them.
Repair and install storm windows or replace leaky windows.	New insulated windows that are rated for the local climate can save money on both cold and hot weather days. Survey your home to detect the leaks using easy and inexpensive methods, for example a sandwich bag attached to a pencil will detect the smallest air leak.
Make sure your home has adequate insulation.	This includes the attic, exterior walls, floors, basement, and crawl spaces. In unheated areas, be sure to insulate around furnace ducts and boiler pipes. This saves energy and money, while paying for the job quickly. Besides, you stay comfortable at home.

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Sources: *Home Heating and Cooling, Home Series 2*. Iowa Energy Center, Ames, Iowa.
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