



## CHANGE FOR THE BETTER WITH ENERGY STAR

Products that earn the ENERGY STAR® prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

### ENERGY STAR® Offers Tips This Winter to Keep Warm and Save Money and Energy

As the weather turns chilly, improve your home's comfort, and save energy and money all while doing a good thing for the environment. By using energy efficiently at home, you not only lower your energy bills, but prevent air pollution too. Here are ways to save, offered by the ENERGY STAR program at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Learn more by going to [energystar.gov/hvacguide](http://energystar.gov/hvacguide) for the Guide to Energy-Efficient Cooling and Heating.

1. **Know the Facts** – The average family spends \$1,500 a year on energy bills, with nearly half of that spent on heating and cooling. Energy-efficient heating and cooling equipment, installed alongside a well-sealed duct system, can save as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs.

2. **Keep it Clean** – A dirty air filter can increase your energy costs and lead to early equipment failure. Clean or change the air filter in your heating and cooling system regularly. Also, have your equipment checked seasonally to make sure it's operating efficiently and safely – check-ups can identify problems early. Dirt and neglect are the #1 causes of system failure.

3. **Bundle Up** – Hidden gaps and cracks in a home can add up to as much airflow as an open window. When heat escapes, your system must work harder and you use more energy. Home Sealing can improve your home "envelope" – the outer walls, ceiling, windows and floors -- and can save up to 10 percent in energy costs. Start by sealing air leaks and adding insulation, while paying special attention to your attic and basement, where the biggest gaps and cracks are often found. If replacing windows, choose ENERGY STAR qualified ones.

4. **Tighten Your Ducts** – If you have a forced air furnace or heat pump, then a duct system is responsible for circulating warm air throughout your home. Leaky ducts can reduce your system's overall efficiency by 20 percent, causing your equipment to work harder than necessary to keep you comfortable. Ask your HVAC contractor about improving your ducts.

5. **Don't Oversize** – When replacing old equipment, make sure your new equipment is properly sized for your home. An oversized system will cost more to buy and operate and will cycle on and off too frequently, reducing your comfort and leading to early system failures and repair costs. Correct sizing will ensure that your equipment works efficiently. Make sure your HVAC contractor uses Manual J or an equivalent sizing tool to determine what's right for your home.

6. **Consult a Professional** – Find an experienced, licensed contractor before embarking on any heating and cooling overhaul. Visit [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org) to find a contractor whose technicians are certified by NATE (North American Technician Excellence), the leading industry-supported testing and certification program.

7. **Shop Smart** – If your heating equipment has not been regularly maintained and is 15 years or older, it's probably time for a more efficient replacement. Ask for an ENERGY STAR when buying the following equipment:

- ❖ **Furnaces** – Old furnaces cost more to operate per year than new, ENERGY STAR qualified models that are 15 percent more efficient than standard models.

- ❖ **Boilers** – An ENERGY STAR qualified boiler uses features like electric ignition and new combustion technologies that extract more heat from the same amount of fuel, to be seven percent more energy-efficient.

- ❖ **Heat Pumps** – When installed in a home with a well-sealed envelope, heat pumps provide great value and comfort for your energy dollar. An ENERGY STAR qualified geothermal heat pump is 30 percent more efficient than comparable new equipment and can save you as much as \$400 annually. A qualified electric heat pump is 20 percent more efficient.

- ❖ **Programmable Thermostats** – Regulate your home's temperature with four programmable settings and you can save about \$100 annually on your energy bills.