

Energy Efficient Tips for Home Heating and Cooling

One of the biggest expenditures for any home's energy consumption is used to heat or cool it. Having our homes at a comfortable temperature should be more than a luxury, but the traditional ways that most homes are heated or cooled burn a great deal of fossil fuels for power.

The result is adding to pollution and using up non-renewable resources, neither of which is environmentally friendly. If you are interested in reducing your impact on the environment, living a green lifestyle, and saving money on utility bills, pay attention to the efficiency of your heating and cooling system and make changes when necessary.

The good news is there are many ways to make your home greener and more efficient and use less energy! And not all of them are complicated. Consider these simple changes that can make a big difference:

Green Thermostat Use

Most of us wouldn't even notice if we kept the thermostat turned down a few extra degrees in colder weather and up some in warmer weather. Yet it can make a huge difference in overall energy savings. Consider purchasing an Energy Star certified programmable thermostat, especially if your home is vacant during the day. You can program the heat or air conditioning to come on a half hour or so before someone is due to arrive home so that it is comfortable when you enter, but no energy is wasted to heat or cool a home when no one is there.

Green Windows

Make sure that all doors and windows are adequately sealed so that there are no air leaks. Traditional windows can be made more efficient with storm windows, which help keep air flow at a minimum, or with retractable and insulated window treatments such as drapes or blinds. If used properly these can help decrease the amount of heat lost or gained into your home. If possible, consider installing energy efficient windows with low-E glass coating and double glazing to add to your home's insulating ability. These are an investment for a tightly sealed thermal envelope and guaranteed savings on energy costs.

Insulation

Most homes are not insulated enough. It might be a project to add more, but can definitely decrease heat loss, increase efficiency, and save money. Most homes can use more insulation in the attic area or in wall cavities.

Ceiling Fans

Installing ceiling fans is an easy way to boost your home's cooling in the summer without a huge increase in energy expenditure. They can also be used in winter if you reverse the direction. Not only are heating and cooling made more efficient, but fans make your home's air healthier too.

Green Furnace

Don't forget to get your furnace regular serviced. When it needs replacing, invest in a more energy efficient model, and you will reap the benefits immediately.

Focus on the efficiency of your heating and cooling system for greater sustainability, and reduced energy bills, too. If you take an energy audit of your house to find some of these areas that can be more efficient, you will be saving energy and money in no time.