

Avoid the Chill and Protect the Climate with ENERGY STAR this Winter Season

Winter officially begins on December 21st, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR program is unveiling its top tips to save energy this season. The average family spends over \$2,000 a year on energy bills, with almost half of that amount going to heating and cooling their home. Check out ENERGY STAR's tips and use this [infographic](#) to save money as you stay warm this winter season.

ENERGY STAR's Top Eight Tips to Save Energy this Winter

- 1.) **Use a programmable thermostat:** Program your thermostat to match your schedule. To maximize savings without sacrificing comfort, program the thermostat to lower the heat by 8 degrees Fahrenheit or more when you're away from home or asleep, and you can save about \$180 per year.
- 2.) **Seal leaks and insulate:** Hidden gaps and cracks in a home can add up to as much airflow as an open window and cause your heating system to work harder and use more energy. Sealing and insulating can improve your home "envelope"—the outer walls, ceiling, windows and floors—which will make your home more comfortable and improve the efficiency of your heating system by as much as 20 percent. You can save up to \$200 a year by sealing and insulating with [ENERGY STAR](#).
- 3.) **Keep your air filters clean:** Check your heating and cooling system's air filter every month. If the filter looks dirty, change it. At minimum, change the filter every three months. This simple change will help your system work at maximum efficiency—lowering your energy bills and helping your family maintain better indoor air quality.
- 4.) **Tune up your HVAC equipment yearly:** Just as a tune-up for your car can improve your gas mileage, a yearly tune-up of your heating and cooling system can improve efficiency and comfort. Learn more [here](#).
- 5.) **Install a door sweep:** Door sweeps--or weather stops for garage doors--seal the gap between the bottom of the door and threshold, preventing cold air from coming in and warm air from escaping.
- 6.) **Use your fireplace damper:** Fireplace dampers eliminate drafts by sealing your fireplace shut when you're not using it. Consider using a fireplace "balloon" to make the seal even tighter.
- 7.) **Change a Light:** With shorter days and longer nights, many families will turn on more lighting at this time of year. Select [ENERGY STAR](#) certified lighting for bulbs that use 75 percent less energy than a standard incandescent and last 10 times longer.
- 8.) **Look for the ENERGY STAR:** If your HVAC equipment is more than 10 years old or not keeping your house comfortable, have it evaluated by a professional HVAC contractor. If it is not performing efficiently or needs upgrading, consider replacing it with a unit that has earned the [ENERGY STAR](#). Depending on where you live, replacing your old heating and cooling system with ENERGY STAR certified equipment can cut your annual energy bill by nearly \$200.

Products, homes and buildings that earn the ENERGY STAR label prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency requirements set by the U.S. EPA. In 2012 alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved \$24 billion on their utility bills and prevented greenhouse gas emissions equal to those of 41 million vehicles. From the first ENERGY STAR qualified computer in 1992, the ENERGY STAR label can now be found on products in more than 70 different categories, with more than 4.5 billion sold over the past 20 years. Over 1.4 million new homes and 20,000 office buildings, schools and hospitals have earned the ENERGY STAR label.