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10 Energy Efficiency Tips to Slash Heating Costs This Winter

 By: AskTheMoneyCoach

America's homeowners continue to shell out significant cold cash to keep warm this winter. Luckily, there are a multitude of easy, effective, and low- or zero-cost ways to make energy efficiency part of your everyday life.

The frostbiting fact is that home heating expenses are expected to jump 10.5%, on average, according to a recent report by the [National Energy Assistance Directors Association](#).

The good news is that homeowners can prevent a utility bill blitz by following a few simple tips. With home heating and cooling accounting for more than half (54%) of home energy use, small steps can go a long way.

- **Leverage the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act:** [The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act](#) is a landmark piece of legislation that encourages us to transition towards a new era of [energy efficiency](#) and [decarbonization](#). These efficiency improvements include upgraded windows, doors, insulation, and other home weatherization services such as highly-efficient heating and cooling appliances like heat pumps. Further, many manufacturers offer valuable rebates.
- **Get “Smart” About Climate Control:** When it comes to smart home temperature control, there are Smart HVAC Systems and Smart Thermostats. Smart HVAC systems have built-in Internet capability and can be controlled directly without additional equipment. Smart Home Thermostats create “smart” systems by enabling remote temperature control via a mobile or Internet-connected device or voice-operated home automation system.
- **Voice Your Preference:** Take control of your comfort. Most HVAC manufacturers offer apps that enable systems to be controlled from anywhere using a mobile device. Voice-control capability uses digital assistants, like Amazon Alexa or Google Home, to verbally dictate home temperatures. Easily controlling the temperature more closely, allows homeowners to be more comfortable and improve energy savings.
- **Find Your Efficient Comfort Zone:** Many of us live in [homes designed](#) for bigger families, but have yet to downsize. If you find yourself using a fraction of your home on a regular basis, consider upgrading to a zoned ducted, or ductless system. That will allow

you to save energy heating and cooling spaces where you and your family don't spend a lot of time. This will multiply savings as you're not only needing less heating but you also gain from a more efficient system in the spaces you do still use.

- **Ward off Energy Vampires:** An "energy vampire" is a device that continues to draw power even when it is turned off or idle—accounting for as much as 20% of your electric bill. A few examples are coffee makers, toasters, hair dryers, laptops and other appliances that are plugged in but aren't in use all the time. Unplug them completely or connect them to advanced power strips that will cut power when appropriate.
- **Turn it Down:** Even a slight temperature decrease can make a difference. You can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling by simply adjusting your thermostat a mere seven-ten degrees for eight hours a day from its normal setting. For example, keep your house cooler than normal when you are away, and set it as low as is comfortable when you are home.
- **Work your windows:** About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through windows. Most window coverings are operable, and yet 75% of residential window coverings remain in the same position every day, according to a study by the U.S. Department of Energy. Open window coverings in the morning to allow the sun to heat your home through the day—especially those that receive direct sunlight.
- **Choose Coverings Wisely:** Not all coverings are created equal. Tightly installed cellular shades can reduce heat loss by 40%, which equates to about 10% heating energy savings. When drawn, most conventional draperies can reduce heat loss up to 10%. Heavier fabrics will typically offer slightly better thermal performance. Close all draperies at night, as well as draperies that don't receive sunlight during the day.
- **Force Down Warm Air:** Denser, cooler air stays closer to the ground, and warmer air rises. So, force it downwards with a low-speed fan. Reverse the fan's setting so it sends the warm air *upwards*, as this will distribute it back down the walls to mix with the rest of the air in the room, gradually raising the ambient temperature.
- **Lock it In:** Insulate and fill the gaps. Use caulk, foam strips or expanding foam to seal up unwanted holes in your home. Thick curtains help to insulate glass at windows. If your windows are

single-glazed, consider sticking transparent polythene film to your internal window frames to act as super-low-budget “double-glazing.”

The secret to success is to leverage the full spectrum of resources at your disposal. A comprehensive, “whole-house” approach is best. By combining proper equipment maintenance and system upgrades with other easy elements homeowners can effectively cut energy use by [20%-50%](#), according to the U.S. Department of Energy. A little knowledge can make a significant difference when it comes to offsetting the profoundly off-putting cost of home heating. To learn more, visit www.constantcomfort.com.

Written by Dennis Stinson, Senior Vice President of Sales for Fujitsu General America

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