

CONSUMER GUIDE: HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOME MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

Heating and cooling a home can be a big expense, especially with energy bills climbing in many areas. If you worry about energy costs, you're not alone. An estimated three-fourths of Americans say they're concerned about rising gas and electric bills, according to a 2025 poll by PowerLines, a consumer education nonprofit organization.

Here are practical tips to make your home more energy efficient:

1. **Make smart upgrades.** When prioritizing home improvement projects, think about both what will cut your energy costs and what will make a difference when you sell. According to the [REALTORS® Residential Sustainability Report](#), windows, doors and siding are the most important energy efficient home features for buyers, with 37% of REALTORS® rating them as very important and 49% as somewhat important. Ask your energy provider whether energy audits or rebates on efficiency upgrades are available in your area.
2. **Swap out appliances.** If an appliance needs to be replaced, consider buying an energy-efficient model. Refrigerators are notorious energy hogs. *Consumer Reports* says models with the freezer on the top or bottom are usually more energy efficient than side-by-side models. In-door ice and water dispensers also add to a fridge's energy use.
3. **Replace HVAC systems.** Upgrade to systems with high Energy Star ratings. Be sure to have your system serviced and change the filter regularly to boost efficiency.
4. **Install a smart thermostat.** The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that homeowners save an average of 8% on their utility bills by using a smart thermostat that uses motion sensors or tracks your phone's location to switch to energy-saving mode when you're not home.
5. **Install ceiling fans.** Using ceiling fans during the warmer months will cut down on the need for air conditioning.
6. **Improve air sealing.** Install door sweeps at the base of all doors that lead to the exterior, and make sure windows are sealed and have weatherstripping. Sealing gaps around doors and windows is also great storm prep for areas that experience hurricanes.
7. **Add insulation.** Boosting insulation in attics, crawl spaces and basements can save an average of 10% on heating and cooling.
8. **Plant trees.** Consider planting shade trees on the west and east sides of your home to shield it from the sun during the summer months. (Remember there are other considerations when planting trees, such as soil quality, utility lines and fire safety.)

Other ways you can save on your energy bills:

- **Close blinds and curtains** to keep heat in during the winter and out during the summer.
- **Set your water-heater temperature** to 120 degrees. Water heating accounts for about 18% of a home's energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.
- **Minimize electricity draw** by unplugging cords or using power strips that can be shut off when appliances are not in use.

These smart upgrades and practices can help you save big each month on your utility bills and could make your home more attractive to future buyers.

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