

## How to Save HUNDREDS of Dollars on Your Heating Bill

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If you live in a region that is cold in the winter, heating costs take a big bite out of your monthly budget for over half the year. Due to the rapidly escalating costs of home heating oil, propane, and kerosene - you may be paying twice as much to heat your house as you did just a few years ago. You can cut your heating costs significantly by following these money-saving tips.

- 1) Do an energy audit of your house, identifying areas where heated air is leaking out. Check around doors, windows, fireplaces, and other areas that may feel drafty. Use caulk, weather stripping, door sweeps, plastic, and other appropriate means to close off these leaks. If your house is poorly insulated, adding additional insulation will pay for itself in reduced heating costs.
- 2) Minimize your use of ventilation fans such as bathroom fans and kitchen hood fans in winter. A bathroom fan can suck all the heated air out of the average house in little more than an hour. Over the course of the winter, ventilation fans can increase your heating costs by a surprising amount.
- 3) Don't heat areas of your house you don't use regularly, such as guest rooms. Close heating vents or turn back thermostats in those areas and close the doors for a painless reduction in heating costs.
- 4) Turn down the heat and use space heaters to heat the room you spend time in.
- 5) Keep your furnace, heat pump, or other heating equipment in top operating condition. Dirty filters reduce the efficiency of your furnace or heat pump. Poorly tuned units are inefficient and use more fuel. An annual maintenance agreement is well worth the money to ensure that your equipment is properly maintained and will last as long as possible.
- 6) Don't turn your thermostat up above the desired temperature. It won't heat up any more quickly and will make your furnace work harder. Also, while it makes sense to turn the heat back when you're sleeping or not at home, turning it down too low can actually cost you more because the contents of the house have to be re-heated in addition to the air. 68 to 70 degrees while you're home and awake and 60 to 65% while you're asleep or not at home are reasonable temperatures.
- 7) Consider a programmable thermostat to raise and lower the temperature at pre-set times.
- 8) Check the temperature setting on your hot water heater. If you have a dishwasher, your water should be heated to 120%. Otherwise, it can be somewhat lower.
- 9) If your water heater is in an unheated space like an unfinished basement, wrap it in an insulation blanket available at hardware stores to prevent heat loss.
- 10) Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible.
- 11) It's tempting to stand under a hot shower on a cold morning for as long as possible, but cutting your shower time in half can save up to 33% on your hot water heating costs.
- 12) In winter, open the blinds and curtains on the sunny side of the house (the south-facing side) when the sun is shining and close them as soon as the sun goes down to retain the solar heat. Close curtains on the shady side of the house (north-facing side). If you don't have curtains, consider installing some. Curtains made from heavy fabric with lots of folds (fullness) can prevent cold air from seeping in and warm air from seeping out, which reduces your heating costs.
- 13)** Perhaps the easiest, quickest, no-cost way to reduce your natural gas heating bills is to switch your service from your current provider. Dominion East Ohio Gas and Columbia Gas of Ohio only offer the uncertainty of month-to-month variable rates compared to alternate providers that offers the stability of a fixed annual rate. Natural gas consumers now have choices! In today's highly volatile energy market – it is now more important than ever for home owners and businesses to make smart choices on their heating bills. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio allows ALL Ohioans to switch to any alternate natural gas supplier of their choice.

**For more information or a no-cost, no-obligation quote for your natural gas service, call TODAY for more information: (440) 748-6300. Or visit [www.spectralight.com/lockrate](http://www.spectralight.com/lockrate)**

**A two minute phone call could save you hundreds of dollars this winter.**