

Heating and cooling tips

Looking for ways to save money on your energy bill?

No cost

68°
78°

Use shades, blinds and drapes to help with heating and cooling. Open them to gain the sun's heat during heating season and close them to block the heat during cooling season. Make it a habit today.

Adjust your thermostat when you are asleep or away from home. You can save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling by simply turning your thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit from its normal setting for 8 hours a day. Recommended thermostat settings when you are home are 68 F in winter and 78 F in summer.

Leave thermostat's fan switch on "auto" so the fan only runs when the furnace runs. Setting the fan to "on" causes it to run all the time, whether or not heating or cooling is needed.

Turn thermostat down to 55 F when using a fireplace. Older, wood-burning fireplaces tend to be inefficient and can be costly, drawing more heated air out of your home through the chimney than a fire can produce. So, turn the thermostat down when you cozy up in front of the fire. After the smoldering embers are out, close the flue damper to keep warm air in the house.

Low cost



Seal cracks and gaps around windows, doors and siding with caulk and weather stripping. This prevents loss of heated or cooled air and improves the comfort of your home.

Use fans in summer, even if you have air conditioning. Circulating cool air makes it feel cooler. Using an air conditioner and fan together means you can set the thermostat at a

higher-than-normal setting to save energy. Keep in mind that it does little good to run fans when you are not around. Similar to an outdoor breeze on a hot summer day, air moving across your body is what makes you feel cooler.

Install a programmable thermostat for your comfort and convenience. It can adjust the heat or air conditioning for times you typically are away (when you go to work) and again for times you typically are home. You also can program it to turn the heat down when you go to sleep and turn it back up before you wake up in the morning. It adjusts automatically, so you don't have to remember to do it.

Schedule regular tune-ups for your furnace and air conditioner. Seasonal maintenance keeps equipment running safely and efficiently, and saves money in the long run.



More ways to save

Furnaces and air conditioners

Choose efficient furnaces and air conditioners when it's time for replacement. Furnaces and air conditioners are expensive to operate and to replace. If you need a new one, do not assume the size of the current unit is appropriate. Look at the unit's efficiency rating. Furnaces with an AFUE (Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency) rating of at least 92 and an electrically efficient blower motor (ECW or variable speed) are best. If you use your central air conditioner a lot, look for a model with a SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating) of 14 or more for the best efficiency.

[Focus on Energy](#) (in Wisconsin) and [Efficiency United](#) (in Michigan) may offer rebates for higher-efficiency furnaces and air conditioners.

Windows

If you just look at energy savings, window replacement should be your lowest priority, since replacing windows involves a large investment. However, if you are getting new windows for other reasons – appearance, condensation, comfort – look for Energy Star qualified windows.

Natural gas

Consider switching to natural gas. Compared to other traditional energy sources, natural gas is the least expensive way to heat your home and water, dry your laundry and cook your food.

Answers to common efficiency questions

Should I adjust air conditioner or furnace when I leave home?

Adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit (lower in winter and higher in summer) from your normal setting for 8 hours a day saves up to 10 percent on your energy bill.

How can I lower my energy bill?

Easiest measures: Close shades, blinds and drapes in summer months to stay cooler and to open them in winter months to use the sun to stay warmer. Adjust your thermostat higher in summer and lower in winter – especially when you are away. Use fans in summer months to circulate air to feel cooler. Turn them off when you are away.

Do fans reduce humidity?

Fans do not reduce humidity, but they will make you feel cooler.

What direction should the ceiling fan rotate in summer and winter?

In summer, set the fan direction so it moves air down from the ceiling. In winter, change the direction to move air upward.