

## Winter Tips

As winter weather approaches, there are a few simple and effective steps we can take to keep the warmth in and the winter out. Home heating costs are expected to rise this season for the most popular sources of heat - natural gas, oil, propane and electricity - so it's more important than ever to make the most of the heat your furnace produces. About 45 percent of the energy used in homes goes toward heating and cooling, so running your system in the most efficient way can make a big impact.

As much as 10 percent can be saved on heating bills by turning the thermostat back 7 to 10 degrees for eight hours. Most people won't even notice the difference while sleeping. Also, if you are going to be out of the house all day or overnight at Atlantic City. Change or clean your furnace filter system each season. Be sure your humidifier element is new or clean and that the water is on and working. Air at the correct humidity feels warmer in the winter.

Inspect your home for leaks that will let in cold air. Particularly feel for cold air coming in around doors, windows and electrical sockets, and seal off leaks or cracks. Get on your hands



and knees (if you can) and look at the seal at the bottom of your doors during the day. If you see light the threshold may have to be adjusted or weather stripping added. Don't

forget the door from the house to the garage. You can also buy those snake socks or use a rolled

up bath towel and lay it against the door bottom. Windows (even though they are double pane) are the least insulated parts of a home, and sealing off gaps with caulk, weather stripping or applying plastic to the windows can stop cold air from flowing in. Metal frames are the worst for



Typical shrink wrap kit

allowing the cold to transfer to the inside and wood is the best. We have plastic framing which is in the middle and not so great. If you have some windows you never open in the winter you can cover them with plastic stretched over the frames. The kind you heat and shrink with a hair dryer looks the neatest. Loew's

and Home Depot have these systems. Also, check to make sure there is insulation on every portion of the ceiling in the attic. Use a flashlight, don't go walking around on the beams. If you see missing or misplaced insulation, call someone in to replace or adjust it (not me!).

Use your clothes dryer sparingly. In addition to using additional gas and electricity, dryers suck out heated air from a room, causing the heating system to work harder. If you have a fan that pulls the air from your kitchen or bathroom, shut it off as soon as you are finished with it. They blow room air to the outside that you just paid to heat. Look at all your ceiling light fixtures to be sure there are no big gaps that allow heat to escape to the attic. You can close or seal the gaps if you have any but do not put insulation over the fixtures in the attic. That could cause them to overheat in the summer and start a fire. Heavy drapes on windows also help but make sure you do not block the heating registers. This goes for baseboard heaters too, do not block them with furniture or drapes. Make sure the air is all vented out with hot water baseboard heating. Open drapes and shades on the sunny side of the house during the day for some free heat from the sun. Unfortunately most of us live in houses that were built on slabs with no radiant heat so the floor

will always feel cold compared to the rest of the house. Be sure your air registers are set for heat. During the winter the top ones should be closed and the bottom ones opened. Angle the slats or vanes downward slightly to help heat the area from the floor up. Again, do not block the registers with furniture or drapery. Wear socks, slippers and a robe or sweats when in for the night to keep yourself warm. Small electric heaters near your desk or favorite chair and in the bathroom could also be a warming idea.

As always, check this and other tips at - <http://www.aaazzz.net/id5.html>

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