



“Home Cents®” Help Tips

10 Ways to make your home more energy efficient

1 Conduct an energy audit. If you are serious about improving your home’s energy efficiency, start with an energy audit by an NRCertified energy advisor. You can locate an advisor in your area by visiting www.nrcan.gc.ca. In an audit you will get a list of recommended upgrades and you may qualify to receive up to \$5,000 in federal ecoEnergy grants. According to Natural Resources Canada, the average retrofit may yield a 30% reduction in energy use.

2 Seal up those drafts. Drafty windows and doors can be a major source of energy loss. If an upgrade is currently not within your budget, you can still save energy and make your home more comfortable by using simple weather-stripping and caulking as an economical way to reduce air leaks.

3 Upgrade your heating system. In older homes, the savings over time from installing a new energy efficiency condensing gas furnace may be the best investment you can make. Talk to a certified heating contractor to help research which heating system is best for your home, climate and needs. You can use the search tool at www.nrcan.gc.ca to find the handy “Home Heating System Cost Calculator.”

4 Add insulation. An uninsulated basement in a home can increase annual heating costs by 10% to 30%, since bare concrete conducts heat outward. In addition, look at adding to the amount of insulation already in your home’s attic to reduce heat loss.

5 Curb your hot water use. In a typical Canadian home, water heating can account for up to 20% of total utility costs. Switch out an older water heater for a more energy efficient model or consider a tankless water heater that warms water on demand, only as needed. Running appliances such as a dishwasher, washer and dryer during off-peak energy times will save you money.

6 Replace energy sapping appliances. If you have outdated or hand-me-down appliances in your kitchen, laundry room or basement, they could be costing you hundreds of extra dollars in operating costs over the years. Clothes dryers alone are about 18% more energy-efficient today than they were 10 to 20 years ago and an older refrigerator can consume as much energy as four new ENERGY STAR® qualified refrigerators.

7 Adjust the heat. Invest in a programmable thermostat to automatically adjust heating levels in your home. As a general rule, you will save 2% on your heating bill for every 1 degree Celsius you turn down your thermostat at night.

8 Cool down wisely. By replacing an old window unit air conditioner in a home or condominium with an ENERGY STAR® qualified model, you can realize substantial savings in your electricity costs. Modern ENERGY STAR® rated air conditioning units use 30% to 40% less energy than older models that were sold 10 to 15 or more years ago.

9 Switch to low flow. Replacing an old 18 litre-per-flush toilet with an ultra low volume (ULV) six litre-per-flush model toilet can achieve a 70% savings in water and cut indoor water use by as much as 30%. For those homes that are serviced by a well there would be no savings in the amount of water being consumed but there would be energy savings plus reduced wear on the electric well pump system.

10 Look for emerging alternatives. As technology advances continue to evolve, consider looking at renewable energy sources such as adding a solar water heater on your roof or using solar energy panels to produce household electricity. These options continue to improve in efficiency and as the cost of this equipment comes down they are becoming more efficient and affordable.

As the demand for energy and the costs increase, we all need to look at ways to reduce our energy use which in turn will reduce the overall costs of running our homes, cottages and other properties. Hopefully you will find these 10 tips helpful as you strive to make your home more energy efficient.

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