

Home Insulation & Caulking

Heating and cooling account for **more than half** of the average home's utility costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. A drafty house and high utility bills are signs that **your home may need insulation and caulking upgrades.**

Tighten up, save

Proper insulation doesn't let air to seep in or out and it can reduce your utility costs and create a more comfortable home. A well-insulated house stays warm during winter and cool during summer.

Here are five considerations:

1. Existing conditions. Determine the effectiveness of existing insulation and where insulation is missing. Professional home energy auditors can pinpoint spots where energy is being lost.

Locate auditors:

- energystar.gov
- resnet.us

2. Where to insulate. Walls and attics are common places to add insulation. Don't overlook other spots, including basement walls, floors above unheated garages, and in between interior walls. According to the Insulation Institute, it's important to create a consistent wrap around a home — a "thermal envelope," with no penetrations.

3. Insulation types. Learn about insulation types, including fiberglass, cellulose, rigid foam board, and spray foam at bit.ly/insulation-types.

4. Performance measures. R-value is a measure of an insulation material's ability to resist heat flow. The higher the insulation R-value, the greater the insulating power.

See the R-value U.S. Map to find the R-value appropriate for your climate: bit.ly/rvalue-map.

5. DIY strategies. Eliminating drafts through sealing and weatherstripping projects are perfect complements to insulation upgrades.

- Doors: Minimize drafts through weatherstripping. See: bit.ly/door-drafts.
- Windows: Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping. See: bit.ly/window-leaks.
- Drapes: Adjust drapes on the sunny side of your house to either block or welcome the sun's heat.
- Ducts: Repair visible, accessible ducts with duct sealant. See: bit.ly/sealducts.

Also check and seal openings around mail chutes, vents and fans, electrical and gas service entrances, cable TV and phone lines, outdoor water faucets, and spaces where dryer vents pass through walls.

Financial incentives

Though Federal tax credits for insulation upgrades have expired, check the Database for State Incentives on Renewables and Efficiency (www.dsireusa.org) to search for any local incentives.

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