



Winter Green

tips



“No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn”
—Hal Borland

Check the ductwork and wrap any leaks with duct mastic. **Distribution losses** (what's lost while air is transported from your furnace through ductwork to the vents) often amounts to **30%**. So, sealing ductwork could increase efficiency and the warm air you receive considerably... keeping you warmer and making your furnace work less.

At the office... Reconsider the space heater



Space heaters consume a large amount of energy for only 1 or 2 people, and they are expensive to operate. For comparison purposes, consider that **20 fluorescent light fixtures** with 2 lamps in each fixture cost about the same to operate per month as **one** space heater.



Fill the gaps

Did you know that the typical American home has enough air gaps to equal the size of a 3-by-3-foot hole? According to the **Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)**, the easiest way to keep the cold air out and the warm air in is to seal up air leaks. Attach door sweeps to the bottoms of doors that lead outside, use window putty to patch gaps around loose window panes and install weather stripping around drafty windows and doors for an airtight seal.



Light it up

Before you fire up that fireplace, check to be sure that the seal on the flue is as snug as possible. The **U.S. Department of Energy** recommends also installing tempered glass doors and an air exchange system that circulates warm air back into the room. If you choose not to use your fireplace, close the damper so that warm air does not escape up the chimney.



Let the sunshine in



Draw open those curtains and let the warmth of the sun naturally heat your home during the day. Even if you have blinds or shades, be sure to close the curtains at night to further reduce the chill from cold windows.

Schedule a tune-up

Just like your car, your furnace needs a seasonal tune-up for peak performance. Call your local **heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)** provider to schedule a maintenance check-up. Outside of the standard maintenance items, **Energy Star** also recommends having the technician check all gas connections, gas pressure, burner combustion and heat exchanger parts to ensure safety and efficiency.



Watch out for those greenhouse gases

Consider **electric snow removal products** rather than gasoline-powered ones. While electric products consume energy, they do not emit greenhouse gases. As alternatives, use snow shovels, ice crackers, and brooms to clear snow from your sidewalk, porch, or driveway.



Adjust for comfort

The **U.S. Department of Energy** estimates that by strategically adjusting your thermostat throughout the day, you'll save about 10 percent annually on your utilities bill. Set the temp as low as comfortable while you're home and dial it back 10 to 15 degrees while you're out or sleeping.