



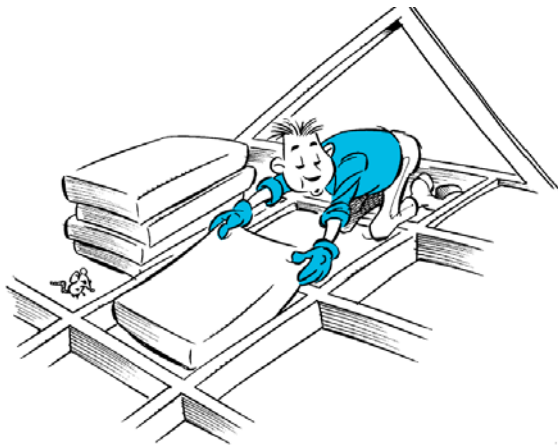
HomeEnergyAdviceTeam

Top Tips for Staying Warm

Your home only needs as much heat as it loses.

Before turning on a heater this winter, think about how much of the neighborhood you're heating. Stop the heat loss and heat your family, NOT your street.

Human beings, like houses, continually shed excess heat. If there was no heat lost from your home, it would eventually overheat no matter how cold it was outside. But it doesn't. How much money you spend on heating your home is a measure of how much heat it loses (and how quickly it loses it). A common analogy is that of hot water in a leaky bucket. Determining how the hot water is made, (i.e. how efficient the kettle that boiled the hot water is), is nowhere near as important as insulating and patching the holes in the bucket. Imagine your home is like the bucket; where would the heat 'leak' out of your home? Now, plug those 'holes'.



Tip 1: Insulate your home well.

Good insulation in your roof and walls will keep you warmer in winter and cooler in summer, saving you money year in and year out, whilst also improving your home's resale value. In an uninsulated home in Canberra, 30-40% of all heat lost is through the ceiling, with 20-30% through the walls and around 10% through the floor. To stop the bulk of this heat loss from your home, insulate your ceiling to R4, walls to R2 and floor to R1.5.

- For the greatest savings, improve your ceiling first then your walls, windows then floor.
- Rockwool cavity wall insulation can be retro-fitted to most brick veneer and double brick homes.
- When building and renovating, avoid penetrations through your insulation layer. Recessed downlights, extraction fans and skylights are all 'holes cut in the doona' of your ceiling insulation.
- It's not the type of insulation you use that matters, it's the 'R-value' that really counts.

Tip 2: Fit good curtains and pelmets.

Once you have insulated your ceiling and walls, most of the remaining heat loss will probably occur through your windows. Installing good curtains or blinds, and box pelmets can more than halve this loss, saving 10% on your heating bills.

- Ensure your curtains go all the way to the floor and wrap to the wall on either side of your window.
- Install box pelmets to reduce the air circulation around your windows.
- Pelmets don't need to be 'boxed' pelmets, anything placed on top of the curtain track that stops air circulating between the curtains and the glass is sufficient.
- Line your curtains with 'blockout' backing to prevent radiant loss (and reduce summer gain).
- Use tightly woven materials, trapping air in as many layers as possible.
- When selecting blinds, consider blinds with built-in air cavities and ensure blinds fit snugly to the window frame (within the reveal).
- And, if you have some northerly windows, open your curtains as wide as possible during the day to let in the warming sunshine.

Tip 3: Seal cracks and gaps.

Although cracks and gaps in houses account for only 10-15% of heat loss, the drafts created make you 'feel' cold. Installing draught excluders under doors, foam strips

around windows and sealing around skirtings and architraves is often the most cost effective way to improve how warm your home feels.

- The smoke from an incense stick held near your doors and windows on a windy night can quickly show up any gaps that need filling
- Double brick homes in Canberra commonly have large gaps between the skirting boards and the floor. This gap is much more noticeable on polished floors, it creates a draft at floor level making the floor 'feel' cold.
- Replace any open exhaust fans with the self-closing type.
- Seal up any unnecessary permanent vents (often found in the walls and ceilings of old homes).

Tip 4: Reduce your heating bill by efficiently zoning your home.

Perhaps the most effective way to save money on heating, is to heat less space. Why heat rooms you're not using? When installing a new heating system, it is important to choose one that is highly efficient (5- or 6-star rated) and allows you to easily isolate areas that aren't in use.

- Create separate zones for areas such as formal living, family rooms, bedrooms, guest rooms and studies (using separate smaller heaters or a controllable ducted system).
- Demand well insulated ducts (R1.0) on new central heating systems.
- Improve the efficiency of your ducted system by using vent deflectors on floor vents to redirect heated air into the centre of your room and out from under furniture.



Tip 5: Consider radiant warmth not just air temperature.

Much of how humans experience feeling warm is to do with radiant heat, not air temperature. At a constant air temperature, you feel warmer if the sun is shining. The radiant energy striking your body makes you feel warm. Instead of increasing the air temperature, increase the level of radiant warmth in your living areas. For example, add curtains to bare windows, to insulate you from the cold glass or add insulation to the ceiling, walls and floor. Targeted

small radiant heaters can also let you lower the thermostat and still be cosy.

Tip 6: Check your EER report.

If your home was energy rated before you bought it, look at the EER report for suggestions on how your particular house's performance might be improved.

More information

This fact sheet is produced by the Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) to provide you with some quick tips on how to keep your home warm. If after reading it you'd like more free information about this or any other topic to do with saving energy in your home, don't hesitate to contact us:

A range of other fact sheets on saving energy and money in your home are available from HEAT



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