

# Save Money and Energy Today

**A**n energy-efficient home will keep your family comfortable while saving you money. Whether you take simple steps or make larger investments to make your home more efficient, you'll see lower energy bills. Over time, those savings will typically pay for the cost of improvements and put money back in your pocket. Your home may also be more attractive to buyers when you sell.

The 115 million residences in America today collectively use an estimated 22.5% of the country's energy. Unfortunately, a lot of energy is wasted through leaky windows or ducts, old appliances, or inefficient heating and cooling systems. When we waste energy in our homes, we are throwing away money that could be used for other things. The typical U.S. family spends at least \$2,200 a year on home utility bills. You can lower this amount by up to 25% through following the Long Term Savings Tips in this guide.

The key to these savings is to take a whole-house approach—by viewing your home as an energy system with interdependent parts. For example, your heating system is not just a furnace—it's a heat-delivery system that starts at the furnace and delivers heat throughout your home using a network of ducts. Even a top-of-the-line, energy-efficient furnace will waste a lot of fuel if the ducts, walls, attic, windows, and doors are leaky or poorly insulated. Taking a whole-house approach to saving energy ensures that dollars you invest to save energy are spent wisely.

## Tips to Save Energy Today

Easy low-cost and no-cost ways to save energy

- Install a programmable thermostat to lower utility bills and manage your heating and cooling systems efficiently.
- Air dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's drying cycle.
- Turn things off when you are not in the room such as lights, TVs, entertainment systems, and your computer and monitor.
- Plug home electronics, such as TVs and DVD players, into power strips; turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use—TVs and DVDs in standby mode still use several watts of power.
- Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120°F.
- Take short showers instead of baths and use low-flow showerheads for additional energy savings.
- Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes.
- Air dry clothes.
- Check to see that windows and doors are closed when heating or cooling your home.
- Drive sensibly; aggressive driving such as speeding, and rapid acceleration and braking, wastes fuel.
- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label on light bulbs, home appliances, electronics, and other products. ENERGY STAR products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.
- Visit [energysaver.gov](http://energysaver.gov) for more energy-saving ideas.

# Your Home's Energy Use

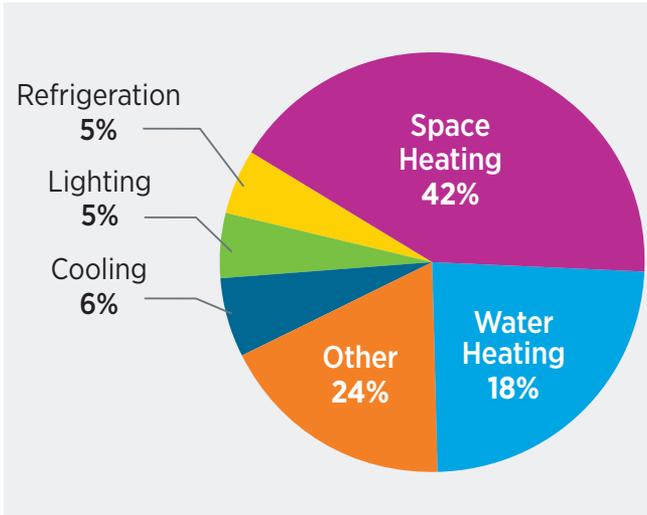
**A** home energy assessment (sometimes referred to as an energy audit) will show what parts of your house use the most energy and suggest the best ways to cut energy costs. You can conduct a simple home energy assessment by doing it yourself (DIY) or, for a more detailed assessment, contact your local utility or an energy auditor. Also, you can learn more about home energy audits and find free tools and calculators on [energysaver.gov](http://energysaver.gov), the Residential Services Network at [resnet.us](http://resnet.us), or the Building Performance Institute at [bpi.org](http://bpi.org).

## DIY Energy Assessment Tips

- Check the insulation in your attic, exterior and basement walls, ceilings, floors, and crawl spaces.

To determine the insulation R-values in different parts of your home, visit the Weatherization section of [energysaver.gov](http://energysaver.gov).

- Check for air leaks around your walls, ceilings, windows, doors, lighting and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets.
- Check for open fireplace dampers.
- Make sure your appliances and heating and cooling systems are properly maintained. Check your owner's manuals for the recommended maintenance.
- Study your family's lighting needs and look for ways to use controls—like sensors, dimmers, or timers—to reduce lighting use.



## How We Use Energy in Our Homes

Heating accounts for the biggest portion of your utility bills. *Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, AEO2014 Early Release Overview.*