

THE COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO HEATING YOUR HOME



Without Spending a Fortune

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Introduction

Are you going to freeze this winter, or spend hundreds of dollars staying warm and cozy inside? What if you could stay warm and enjoy the winter while actually SAVING money. Wouldn't that be nice?

In any given year, homeowners spend more money on heating their home during the winter (or cooling during the summer in warm clients) than on any other energy expenditure. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, investing in energy-efficient appliances can result in cost savings equivalent to thousands of dollars every year!

This book is dedicated to any and all homeowners interested in learning what they can do to improve the heat efficiency of their home – without spending thousands of dollars. You don't have to hire a professional to winter proof your home, though you may want to hire a professional inspector at some point to assess what areas of your home need improvement. (For example, you may want to hire someone to check your furnace to make sure it is working efficiently).

While many consumers live in modern homes containing energy-efficient appliances, many others live in older homes. These homes are prone to problems including drafty windows and inefficient heating devices.

In this guide, you will learn practical, common sense tools for saving money on heating costs during the winter, without spending thousands of dollars.

You MIGHT decide to hire a professional to inspect your home at some point. You CAN however, use the resources section and learn how to conduct safe preliminary inspections on your own.

In fact, it's quite easy to find the places in your home that need repair when it comes to maximizing the fuel efficiency of your home. Most people, for example, find they need to seal their windows to prevent heat from escaping during the winter. How do you do that? You are about to learn.

This guide is suitable for anyone that wants to lower their heating costs, whether you are a handyman or someone that is not-so-handy when it comes to home

improvements. Following even a few of the tips and techniques in this guide may result in hundreds, even thousands of dollars in energy savings over time. Many of the tips provide instant results.

So get out your pen and paper and get ready. You are about to embark on the journey of a lifetime. Find out how to keep your home warm no matter the season using the handy tips in this guide.

No Experience Necessary...

Remember, this is a practical guide for practical people. Get ready to discover common sense cost savings.

Chapter One – Winter Warm Up

During the winter, many families look for conservative ways to save money on heating expenses. Yes, you can hire an expensive professional to come to your home and set up a new furnace, new airways and “cold-proof” your home for the winter, but...

You don't HAVE to. In fact, most of the steps you should take to keep your home warm during the winter are simple enough to do on your own at home. You can also take steps to keep your body warm without wasting unnecessary money on heating.

Interesting Statistics

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the total consumption of energy and production of energy has increased in recent decades. People are working harder, not smarter, to heat their homes in the winter and cool them in the summer. With this come increases in expenditures by single and multiple family homeowners.

As the price of gas continues to rise, more and more consumers are looking for renewable energy resources. The same report shows households and regions using or taking advantage of renewable energy resources, including solar panels and the like, typically spend much less each year on heating costs than homes using traditional energy resources.

Quick Stats

- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, most families spend an average of \$1,400 or more every year on energy, most of which is spent on heating.
- The use of “energy efficient” equipment as defined by the EPA may save you as much as 20 percent on heating bills during the winter.
- Energy Star equipment, including furnaces, tends to be 20 to 40 percent more efficient, which means you save bundles of money.

- Turning your water heater to the lowest setting when you are away from the home, and keeping your furnace at a reasonable setting, no more than 125 degrees generally, can save you tons on energy costs, from 8 to 15 percent of your annual heating expenditures.
- Washing your clothing in cold water can also save you lots of money on heating. Most people mistakenly believe they must use hot water to clean their clothing. However, there are new cold water friendly detergents that work just as well as hot water to clean clothing, remove stains and keep you feeling fresh and safe. Some studies suggest you can save as much as 80 percent or more on energy expenditures by washing most of your laundry in COLD instead of hot water.
- Limit hot showers to ten minutes, and you may save a few hundred dollars each year. Some people are known to shower for as long as one hour, or until the hot water runs out. This is NEVER a good idea.
- Keep the vents leading from your dryer to the exterior free of lint so the heating system in your dryer works more efficiently. When possible, hang clothing to dry to save even more money on heating expenses.
- Save hundreds of dollars by weather proofing your roof, the floors and the windows in your home. You may cut your costs by as much as 10 percent!
- Use a wood stove or insert that allows your fireplace to blow hot air into your home instead of up the chimney and out of the home. Be sure you are able to do this by following the manufacturer's guidelines. You may want to talk to a professional before trying this, but you may save anywhere from 5 to 10 percent on heating costs by doing this.

- Make sure your furnace is not older than 10-12 years old so that it works efficiently. The older the furnace, the less likely it is to work well when heating your home.
- Make sure you have very thick insulation to pad your attic, especially within the rafters so heat that is in your home stays in your home. You may save anywhere from 5 to 20 percent on heating costs and preserve energy while doing it.
- If you have a water heater located in the basement, consider placing an insulated covering over it. Most building supply stores offer such products, which prevent heat from escaping the furnace.
- Taking out an air conditioner and sealing your windows may save as much as 10 to 20 percent on energy costs, depending on the location of the window and size of the unit. If you prefer to leave the air conditioner in place, make sure you insulate or place foam around it, seal the window and cover the unit with a thick tarp or pre-made covering (also available at many hardware or building stores). You can also use something as simple as a canvas or plastic tarp, which costs pennies on the dollar, to insulate the appliance in question. Remember, it's all about common sense!
- Only buy and install newer model energy efficient furnaces, which can save you thousands of dollars in a few short years. If you have an old furnace, make sure you inquire about a new furnace's efficiency before you purchase.

Leaving your curtains open to allow light in and taking advantage of solar energy are a few ways to conserve heat and reduce the costs associated with heating your home during the winter. There are, fortunately, many programs provided by the government that now recognize the need for financial assistance to consumers interested in using renewable energy resources to help save the planet and reduce the costs associated with energy consumption.

You can find more information about these programs in the resources section.

In Many Regions, The Number Of Days Consumers Use Expensive Heating Resources To Heat Their Homes Is On The Rise, Costing Many Consumers Millions Over A Lifetime...

In the New England region, for example, heating use or the need for heat continues to rise as global temperatures produce colder and longer winters, and hotter summers. What that means is you will have to work harder to heat your home for longer times.

If you continue to use traditional energy resources, you could find that your heating bill increases exponentially.

There are, however, many people that are starting to realize renewable sources of heat exist. Still others realize they can take advantage of cost-saving measures that anyone can implement to help save money instead of spend money on energy when winter comes.

The key to sustainable change is changing the way you think, and the way you prepare your home for the winter.

More and more, people realize they need practical and inexpensive tools they can use to help improve the insulation of their home. Doing so will allow people to spend less money on heating.

In the next few chapters, find out exactly what you can do to help heat your home during the winter without paying a professional tons of money.

While a few of the suggestions may involve the help of a professional, most of the tips and techniques provided in this guide are simple and easy-to-use. And, as for the tips that do require some assistance, why not look for a local handyman or neighbor? Or, try taking a class or two. Many local home building supply stores offer classes that teach consumers how to install insulation or padding for example. Take advantage of these so you can become your own personal “fixer-upper”.

Take advantage of the information and tips provided in the next chapter, and giggle with glee as you realize your heating and utility bill decreases this winter. Why not save up the extra money and plan that vacation you’ve been thinking

about year after year? Better yet, take it during the winter, when you can turn the heat down in your house for several days and save even MORE money for a trip the following year?

When it comes to saving, everyone can benefit. Now that you know how important savings are, you need to get down to business, and find out what you have to do to heat your home each winter without spending a fortune.

In the next chapter, you'll learn about some practical, everyday tips you can take advantage of to save on your heating costs each and every year. You will find with time the more tips you implement, the better able you are to heat your home on a budget. Let's get to it!

Chapter Two – Practical Steps for Warming the Hearth

Now that you have an idea of how important it is to winter-proof your house, it's time you figure out how to do that. You also need to understand that part of saving money during the winter has to do with keeping your body warm.

Tips for Keeping Warm and Cozy

No matter how harsh or cold the weather, there are always at least a dozen or more steps you can take to keep warm. In this section, you will learn practical and convenient, low-cost measures anyone can adopt to prevent unwanted heat loss. Remember, not all of these suggestions may be suitable to your situation. Consider each individually. You may decide to try one or two, and then a few more as you have time.

The goal of this section is to:

1. Teach you HOW to stay warm effectively and efficiently.
2. Help you understand the biological processes that creates warmth in the body.
3. Offer you inexpensive tools for weather proofing your home, so you save on heating (and negate the need to pay for an expensive professional to “fix” your home).

Most people have tools readily available they can use to keep warm, but rather than use them, they just turn up the heat. What this does is drive up your energy and utility costs. Yes, your home may feel warmer, but in most homes, the slightest draft or leak from a window can result in unnecessary heat loss.

Covering Windows

One of the simplest ways to keep heat in your home is by covering your windows. You can approach this many ways. Here are some ideas. You may choose one or all of them, as they are all helpful for heating a home. When used in combination, you may find these tools all you need to survive the cold months of winter.

1. Cover your windows with blinds.
2. Use curtains to block drafts.

3. Invest in inexpensive sealants to prevent warm air from escaping your home and cold air from entering your home.

Windows are a source of cold air and drafts. If you live in an older home especially, chances are high some cold air drafts leak through your windows, because they do not seal properly.

Now, getting the windows replaced in your home is one option, but it is very expensive. You may spend \$10,000 or more replacing just a few windows in your home, and you may not even solve your drafty problem! Here is a better choice. Use heavy blinds or curtains to prevent drafts from entering your home. Even better, buy a protective sealant, one you can buy in most home improvement centers or online, and place it over each window of your home.

Sealing Your Windows with Shrink Wrap

How to Use Wrap to Seal Cold Drafts

One of the simplest and most effective ways to keep hot air in your home and cold air out is by using shrink wrap. Shrink wrap is nothing more than a form of plastic wrap formulated especially for windows. It literally shrinks and conforms to your window to help prevent air from escaping or coming in.

Shrink wrap comes in many shapes and sizes. You can buy pre-cut forms of clingy wrap at a home improvement store. Usually all you have to do is adhere the material to the outer edges of your window and then blow dry so the material stays put (until you take it down in the spring).

Some find this process a bit tedious. If it sounds like too much work, invite a few friends over and turn your window warming activities into a small party.

You can offer rewards to the people that seal the most windows in the least amount of time. Then, you can all take turns shrink wrapping or protecting the windows in your acquaintances home.

Wraps, regardless of who makes them or the brand, are easy to apply and remove. Usually all you have to do in the spring is tear them down. And, because they do not cost much, most people have no trouble doing this.

Keep in mind however, you can keep the wrap in place to keep cool air in during the summer. Most people however, prefer the option of having their windows open during the summer to allow fresh air inside.

If you aren't sure what type of wrap will work best in your home, consult with a specialist. Many shops provide various sizes pre-sized shrink wrap for certain types of window.

Keep in mind the wrap sold for windows is not the same as the wrap you use to cover a piece of cooked chicken and store it in the refrigerator... but the idea is the same!

Keeping Your Body Warm

Another tool for saving money on heating costs during the cold months is simply this – keep your body warm. You can turn down your heat during the day (and up at night if you want to sleep cozily).

You should layer your clothing, so you wear an undershirt, a t-shirt and possibly a sweater over it, for example. Many women find wearing stockings under their pants helpful for staying warm during the colder months of the year. Men can also wear long-johns or flannel lined pants to keep warm.

Here are some other helpful hints when it comes to keeping your body warm during the winter.

- **Make sure you have wool socks and wear them religiously as you go about your business.** You can find socks that are casual and comfortable. Long gone are the days when you had to invest in thick, bulky wool socks to get your money's worth. Today you can even buy formal socks made of wool that are sleek and elegant, perfect for a business meeting or a night out on the town.

- **Consider wearing a hat inside the house.** Most of the heat in our body escapes through our head, feet and hands. If you keep these areas warm, you are more likely to feel warm. While you are at it, why not put some socks or a pair of mittens over your hands. You will find when you keep your feet, head and hands warm, your entire body feels warmer. You may be wearing the best flannel pajamas ever, but still freeze if you fail to keep your feet warm. At the very least you should own a pair of slippers with insulation.
- **Use your oven instead of a crock pot if you have time.** Crock pots are very convenient. You can put your dinner in them, leave for work and come home to a cooked meal. On the weekends however, when you are home, consider cooking food in your oven, which naturally gives off heat. The heat of the oven will help keep your home warm, and you can lean over your oven to warm up when you get the chills...
- **Make sure if going out you wear extra gear, including mittens or gloves and a scarf.** If you are warm when outside, you are more likely to feel even warmer when you return to your home. Take your scarf and wrap it up around your ears and your nose, so only your eyes peak out. You can go one step further and protect your eyes with a pair of sunglasses (the sun is ten times brighter when it reflects the snow).
- **Designate certain days of the week, like Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays as days you will turn down the heat and bundle up.** That way you don't have the heat running full blast throughout the cold season. Make it a family affair. You can celebrate, cook a warm meal and bundle up together. Why not hunker on the couch and cozy up while at it? Body heat is after all, quite the best when it comes to feeling warm and cozy.
- **Dry off in the shower and get dressed while still in the bathroom.** You will stay warmer if you take the time to dry off completely while still in the shower (with the water turned off of course). Then, have your clothing handy so you can get dressed in the bathroom. The bathroom will feel warm because of the heat produced from your hot shower. Make sure you keep that bathroom door closed until you finish dressing. Then you can open the door and share your warm air with the rest of the room. You will also feel warmer and forgo the chills normally associated with stepping out of the shower during the winter.

Some people also find it helpful to soak their feet in a warm bath or use a blanket while sitting on the couch.

When it comes to your body, often you are the best judge of what will and what will not work. Find different ways to keep your body warm and you will be less inclined to pump the heat up while at home. Remember, your ultimate goal here is to save, not spend, money.

Winter Cleaning...

We've all heard about spring cleaning, but what about winter cleaning? The purpose of winter cleaning may not be to keep a tidy home (though this is a nice effect), but rather to keep your body warm,

When you clean your home, especially when you move about quickly, your body heats up and burns calories. Good activities to try include mopping floors and vacuuming.

You can also snuggle up among warm clothes freshly dried as you fold them. Make cleaning a game where you see how fast you can clean and just how warm you get while cleaning during the winter. You can have your children or other family members help you out, making tidying less of a chore and more of an experiment in warmth and comfort.

When all is said and done, not only will you have a clean home, you will also feel better and much, much warmer!

While cleaning, make a point to look around your home for places where hot air may be escaping. If you find a hole, patch it up (this will also prevent outside pests from entering your home to warm up). Make sure you seal up your basement and close the vents in your basement if you don't plan to use it much during the winter. Otherwise your furnace will spend most of its time heating your basement and not the rest of your house.

Don't forget to check all windows and make sure they are sealed properly and if not, seal 'em. You can use some tape as a temporary fix until you have the time to seal a window properly.

Some of the best fabrics you can invest in to store your body heat during colder months include wool, cotton and even synthetic fleeced fiber. Most people associate wool with itchy and scratchy clothing, but today there are many varieties of wool, some even designed for wear during warmer days.

Make sure you do your homework. If nothing else, everyone should own a pair of warm, wooly socks. Warm socks are probably the best investment you can make when it comes to your body, especially the wool kind. Don't forget that.

Now that you know how to warm your body up, let's find out some of the little-known "tricks" of the trade that will keep you warm for months on end.

Tricks of the Trade

Now, warming your body and keeping your windows covered are excellent ways to stay warm during the winter. However, there are even more clever tricks you can use to save on heating and enjoy a hearty winter (without freezing!).

Drafty Doors

Not everyone realizes they lose heat through drafty doors. Do you know if you have drafty doors? It's easy to find out . . .

Just place your hand next to the bottom of your doors; do you feel a draft of air coming in or going out? Many doors, like windows, are sources that allow heat to escape the home (or cold air to enter the home).

One way to save on energy costs is to simply install simple draft blockers, often called "excluders" at the bottom of your doors. They are very inexpensive, and a good tool for keeping heat within your home. As a short-term fix, you can also put a blanket at the bottom of the door to prevent air from entering or escaping, until you have time to install draft blockers or extenders.

If you notice wind or cold air coming from the sides of your door, consider investing in some foam tape. This is also an inexpensive item sold at most hardware stores. You can place these near areas in your door wear gaps of cold air enter or where heat escapes.

One last tip... Don't leave your doors open for longer than you have to. This applies to your front door, your patio door and your garage door. If someone comes over and wants to talk, ask them to come inside or step outside and close the door.

Ordering pizza in the middle of the winter? Close the door while you get your money in order, whether you stand outside with the freezing delivery person or invite them inside. Whatever you do, don't stand IN your doorway while chatting because you will allow loads of hot air to escape, not something you want when you are trying to save energy.

Everyone needs to be frugal here and there.

One of the simplest ways to be frugal is by simply using common sense during the winter.

There are at least two dozen ways you can lower your heating costs by using common sense. Wearing a hat, indoors or outdoors for example, will keep you warm and reduce the odds you will crank your heat after getting home. Let's review some other simple ways to reduce the costs of heating a home.

Guidelines for Saving Money and Preserving Heat

Everyone has different advice to give when it comes to saving energy and saving on heating costs during the winter. The choices you select will depend on your home, your personal preferences and even your age. Older people for example, or really skinny people, are more likely to feel chilly than younger or larger people during the winter. It's all a matter of insulation and blood circulation.

Here are some guidelines to follow while trying to save money on heating. Use any of these tips and tricks of the trade (the same ones professionals use in their own home) to keep you warm this winter.

- **During the daytime, if your windows are sealed remove any curtains or blinds so natural sunlight can shine into your home.** Natural sunlight, even during the winter, is a sure-fire tool for heating up a home. Even if you do not seal your windows, you will benefit by having some light come in during the day. Just be sure to cover the windows back up once the sun starts to fall or on a cloudy day, so you don't lose heat unnecessarily.
- **Try placing extra throw rugs about the house.** Key to keeping a home warm is insulation. There are many ways to insulate your home. Most homes are pre-insulated, meaning the spaces between the wall contain insulation that guard against heat. However, there are other things you can do to keep your home insulated. One way is by using throw rugs to cover up bare floors in the kitchen or if you have wood floors anywhere in your home. You can also place throw rugs over thin carpeting to provide an extra layer of warmth.
- **Invest in a powerful but small space heater.** This is one of the easiest and cost-effective ways to heat a room. You can turn your heat down during the day, wear warmer clothes, and then keep your heat down and use a small space heater instead in your bedroom at night. There are some that are far more efficient and save much more money than turning the furnace up high. You can take a small portable heater just about anywhere. If you have small children, make sure you get one that is child safe. Some brands are built to automatically click off if they are knocked over, so your child won't burn their skin or experience any other injury.
- **Make sure you have extra blankets handy, to use on your bed.** Remember, blankets, just like throw rugs, can act as insulators even for your mattress. Since you are not as active while sleeping as you are during the day you are more likely to feel cold.
- **Try using a thermostat that automatically detects the temperature in your home.** Some thermostats are programmable, meaning you can set them at lower temperatures so they automatically stop heating the homes during certain periods of the day.

- **Make sure you have your furnace inspected.** A properly working furnace will heat a home far better than an older one. You will also want to make sure you have clean furnace filters in your furnace. A bad filter can reduce the efficiency of your heating unit. If you do not know how to change the filter in your furnace, ask the tech when he inspects it or call the manufacturer for instructions. You can even look up your furnace brand and model online. Most companies now post brochures and help information on the Net these days.
- **Close the vents in bathrooms.** These are the rooms you are likely to use far less than others, so there is no reason to heat them fully (except maybe when you want to step out of a hot shower). An open vent in a small bathroom or half bathroom can produce a lot of heat, heat that is wasted in an area of the house seldom used. You should also make sure you close the doors to any rooms you do not use often to prevent heat from escaping the main living areas or bedrooms.
- **If you take a hot bath, allow the hot bath and steam to enter other rooms.** Don't drain your bathtub until the water is actually cold, because the warm water will evaporate and generate heat. You can use a fan to disperse this heat into your bedroom or an adjacent hallway or family room (depending on the location of your bathtub). The same is true of water you boil on the stove.
- **Turn down your water heater.** Many people turn their water heaters up too high. For the most part, people can get by if they keep their thermostat at no higher than 125 degrees. That way you won't accidentally scald anyone, and you will also save a few dollars on your energy bill. You can turn your water heater up temporarily if you really want to take a steaming hot bath, or, if you belong to a gym or recreation center, take your hot shower there... and save the heat in your home for practical uses.
- **Put more insulation in the walls of your home.** You may want to add insulation to crawl spaces, for example. While this may require assistance from a professional, over the long-term you will save money. It sounds a bit complicated, but there are select areas a professional or handyman may suggest you can stuff with insulation. If you have a swamp cooler, for example, that you use during the summer, you can pad it with insulation or

foam during the winter to make sure no heat escapes and no cold air enters your home from the wall or wherever the cooler may be mounted.

- **Make sure you take advantage of ceiling fans even during the winter.** They can easily distribute heat throughout your home. If your home is sealed against cold drafts, you will not lose any heat when you use ceiling fans to ventilate warm air throughout your home. You can also use a portable fan and place it in various locations throughout your home where you feel the heat is not dispersed well.
- **Make sure your air ducts are clean, so warm air flows through them without obstruction.** Typically you can find someone to clean your ducts inexpensively. Check your mailers and see if there are any coupons you can take advantage of that will save you money when cleaning out your ducts. You can also close certain heat ducts to concentrate heat in the areas of your home where you need it most.
- **If you have a chimney, make sure you close the vent or flue of the chimney, as air can escape through here.** If your furnace is vented, when you are not using your furnace keep that vent shut to protect against over-heating your home. You can turn a pilot off in a fireplace too during the summer, which saves you money on cooling your house down.
- **Take the time to insulate hot water pipes in your home and electrical outlets.** You can likely do this on your own. To seal electrical outlets, go to a local supply store. They will show you what kind of insulation you need. You will need to remove the outer cover of the outlet to place the insulation inside. Some stores also sell plugs you can put into your electrical outlets that prevent heat from escaping (if you aren't using them). For your hot water pipes, you can usually surround them with foam or special fiberglass insulation. Again, check in with your local home supply store or a building supply shop and someone will help you get what you need. Keep in mind you will only be able to do this if the hot water pipes in your home are readily visible.
- **Consider a thermostat you can program, so your home heats to a certain temperature automatically during certain times of the day.** You can, for around \$100, find a programmable thermostat you can set to low temperatures during the day while you are at work, and higher temperatures when you are home at night or sleeping. Many people leave

their thermostat at a cooler temperature at night and simply bundle up a bit more. That is what flannel pajamas and socks are for, after all.

- **If using a space heater in a small room with a door, close the door so heat stays in the room.** If you do this you use less energy to heat the room. Look for small space heaters that have automatic features or thermostats you can set, or those with environmentally friendly logos on them so you know you are getting the most bang for your buck and not wasting energy (and spending too much money). You can shop online easily for a proper heater. When you leave the room be sure to turn the space heater off, or turn the thermostat down if it has one. That way you'll use the heat you need only when you need it most.
- **Exercise more frequently.** Most people want to exercise LESS during the winter. It's cold! But, the more you exercise, the more heat your body will produce, and the better you will feel. Exercise gets your blood circulating and stimulates your body in other ways. Some people may find their immune system works better with regular exercise. So no matter what, try to engage in 20 minutes of exercise each day, even if that means doing sit-ups in front of the TV. This will boost your metabolism and get the blood flowing throughout your body, which naturally serves to help you feel warmer and better during the day.

Many people find by adopting one or more of these tips, they save anywhere from one to ten percent on heating costs during the winter. Just how much you save will depend on the tips you take advantage of and the number of tips you incorporate into your life.

What will you do with those savings? The choice is yours. Why not, as suggested earlier in this guide, vacation? Why not go out to dinner, enjoy something you've been longing to buy or better yet... invest and save the money. You may need it later!

Now, most of the suggestions offered so far are easy to incorporate and often a short-term solution to heat and energy problems. There are also longer-term solutions if you have an interest in improving your home's efficiency with time. One of the main ways to conserve and save on heating costs and even cooling costs is by taking advantage of light.

Light, as we know it, is also often referred to by specialists as “solar energy”. Let’s find out how to use it.

Solar Energy

Other ways to save money include using solar energy to heat your home. This is a longer-term investment, however - one that may require the help of a professional. Because this book is dedicated to providing you with cheap, effective strategies for reducing your heating costs, we will not talk about solar heating too much.

You should however, recognize there are many homes now being built with solar heating panels. Since heat and light can conduct energy, these panels can be used for many purposes.

Here are some resources you can use to find more information about solar panels and their many uses, including heating and providing electricity to homes.

- **SEIA** – www.seia.org - The Solar Energy Industries Association provides information for professionals and laypeople in the solar industry. Here you can learn more about solar energy and power, and the many ways people use solar power for heating. Find out how solar energy can help you save money in the winter and during the summer using practical tips. You will also find links to product manufacturers on this site, and discover ways you can become involved in the solar heating and sustainable living movement. (This is a movement geared toward promoting conservation and sustaining the earth’s valuable resources, which many feel we are depleting).

- **National Renewable Energy Laboratory** – www.nrel.gov - The National Renewable Energy Laboratory is subsidized by the U.S. Department of Energy and provides information and resources to people looking to learn more about solar power, cost effective and sustainable technologies. You can also volunteer to help out organizations interested in cost-efficient and energy-efficient tools for use in the home and in business.

Keep in mind the sun is a source of solar energy whether you use solar panels or simply open a few windows. When the sun faces south open the blinds on the

south side of your house and you'll naturally provide added heat to the rooms in that section of your home.

Use a fan and blow some of that "hot" air into other rooms in your home.

Remember, every little step you take will save you money. Simply lowering your thermostat may save you from 1 to 4 percent or more in heating costs during the year. That adds up over time and makes a big difference. Most people would gladly put on a sweater and lower their heat to save a few hundred dollars, or a few thousands of dollars over time, wouldn't you?

Now that you know how to start saving time and money heating your home, it's time to start acting. Here is an exercise for you. Look at each of the tips and tricks of the trade listed in this guide. Now, pick out five that appeal most to you. Write them down. Write down a deadline for implementing them.

Once you do, take notice of your heating bill. Find out if it starts to lessen. If not, write down two more steps and see what happens. With time, you will find your heating bill does indeed start to drop.

Keeping a Money-Saving Journal

Here is some space you can use to keep track of your techniques and the amount of change you see in your bills.

Tip #1 _____

Tip #2 _____

Tip #3 _____

Tip #4 _____

Tip #5 _____

Don't forget when doing this to keep track of your monthly savings...

Savings _____

Savings_____

Savings_____

Savings_____

Savings_____

You are doing great!

You may want to keep a journal to keep track of your expenses in the winter AND in the summer, so you start recognizing patterns and discovering even more ways you can modify your habits and practices to help save you money and improve the energy efficiency of your home.

Money Tracking Tips

If you haven't been tracking your expenses until now, start doing it. Set aside a journal and a folder where you can place all of your utility and heating bills. Don't forget to add receipts for items you buy to heat your home, like space heaters.

For every bill you get, you should review items line-by-line to see where you can save a little extra money, and discover times when you are likely to lose money. If you track your bills yearly, with time you will discover patterns you can easily overcome to help you create a more conservative and heat efficient home.

If you aren't the type that feels organized, enlist the help of your spouse or your children. If you have older children, they will benefit by learning how to track expenses and reduce costs associated with maintaining a home. Let your children learn how to conserve early, so that when they grow they automatically incorporate energy saving practices and habits into their lifestyle.

As this practice continues, more and more people will recognize how important it is to save our energy and find more renewable and sustainable resources, ones we need for heat, energy and power.

Now, there are other fun ways you can help create heat in your home, internally. That means you can heat your body, much in the way you would heat up when embarrassed or if an older woman, having a hot flash. Heating your body automatically tricks your mind into thinking and believing your home is warmer than it really is.

Thus, you are less inclined to crank the heat because of a false sense of cold. In the next section, you will learn how what you eat can affect your temperature, and your ability to withstand cold and other sensations during the harsh months of winter. Ready to find out?

Chapter 3 – Your Winter Warming Diet

The best part of winter is you don't have to diet at all.

Now, there are people that may argue just the opposite, but when you look at diet logically, you CAN discover tools that will help create internal heat, the kind that warms you from the inside out.

When it comes to saving money on heating costs, most people think of things they can do around the house. There is however, another approach you can take to help “warm” your home during the winter, and it has more to do with what you put in your mouth than what you do with your home.

Most people don't give much thought to the foods they eat - whether it is winter, spring or summer. Eating the right types of foods, however, can help you “warm up” internally during the colder months of winter. When you “feel” warmer, you naturally are less inclined to turn your furnace up higher to keep you and your home warmer.

If you manage to eat just the right combination of foods, you may even find you avoid gaining excess weight during the winter. Now that's a benefit EVERYONE can enjoy. This is true especially during the holidays, when most people are prone to putting on a few pounds.

Summer Foods

There are winter warming foods and then there are summer foods. While this book is dedicated to keeping you warm during the winter, you should have an idea of what foods are better saved for the spring or summer.

If you tend to eat too many “summer” foods in the winter, you'll likely feel cold no matter how high you turn the heat up in your home.

What does that mean? You should avoid eating large quantities of summer foods during the cold months. It isn't a coincidence that some

fruits, vegetables and other food products thrive during certain times of the year.

Typically cold foods including salads are helpful during the summer as they tend to keep your body cool. During the winter you are far better off eating stir fried or steamed vegetables than salad. Cold soups like gazpacho are another luxury item you should avoid during the winter to keep warm.

At the same time you may find gazpacho just the treat you need during the summer to cool off after a hard day's work. Remember, think of your body as its own heat-creating machine. The more you work to stay warm from the inside out, the less energy you will expend heating from the outside in.

Warming Foods for Winter

So, what types of foods should you concentrate on eating during the winter? Here are some excellent ideas.

- **Curry** – foods containing curry, an ingredient that helps spice foods, tend to be warming. Examples may include vegetable curry or Thai curry. You don't have to be a chef to learn how to add curry to your diet. Simply go to your local grocer and look for the international foods section. Curry in scrambled eggs is excellent. Curry also tastes good when mixed with potato soup and other delights. Consider investing in a cookbook that teaches you fun and simple recipes you can adopt to help warm your body during the coldest months of the year.
- **Chili** – chili is one of the simplest foods to make. Whether you are a vegetarian or a meat lover, you are bound to find a chili recipe you love. For the most part, chili is nothing more than some beans, vegetables and if you like, some form of meat mixed together and then spiced with various ingredients including cayenne pepper. If you don't want to make your own chili sauce you can buy small packets for pennies on the dollar at the grocery store. You can make big batches of chili and freeze some to use later, for those extra cold days you need a lift.

- **Tea** – Tea and other warm drinks are helpful for warming the soul during the winter. You can also enjoy other hot drinks like coffee, just be sure to eat something with your coffee so the acid doesn't upset your stomach. Hot chocolate is another popular and tasty choice. You can even sip warm water with a splash of lemon to help cleanse your body and keep you warm during the winter.
- **Cayenne** – Cayenne and other peppers are sometimes used in diet products. Why? They heat the body. They may also help boost your metabolism and may help keep the blood in your body circulating. There are many types of foods you can add cayenne spice to. If you prefer less spicy foods, you can actually get cayenne in a capsule at most health or herbal food stores. Check it out and try it.
- **Peppers** – You don't have to down a bowl full of jalapenos to stay warm (unless you want to). However, you can add a blend of various peppers to help add to the flavor of your main dishes and help warm your body during the winter. Peppers taste great with chicken, Thai or stir-fry dishes, in vegetable soups, with stews, in chili and more. Experiment with peppers and see what you like. You can even dice them and add them to hamburger mix to make a mighty hot meatloaf!

Here is another fun and helpful tip. You may already do this, but in case you don't here is some good advice.

When you cook foods in your oven, leave your oven open to let heat escape into a room and provide instant relief from a chilly breeze or cold hands and feet. Certainly you've opened your freezer or refrigerator more than once during hot summer months to "cool down" haven't you? The same concept applies to your oven. Stand next to any heat source, and you are likely to enjoy and reap the benefits of more heat.

Track Your Warm Winter Food Using Our Diary

The healthier and warmer foods you eat, the more likely you are to combat colds and other illnesses, which can contribute to feelings of cold or loss of heat. What are some foods you like to eat that provide you warmth and comfort? Create a list of your top five choices here, and make sure you have them readily available for times when the weather turns cold.

Don't forget to add at least one favorite warm beverage to your list of must have food items during the winter.

Item #1 _____

Item #2 _____

Item #3 _____

Item #4 _____

Item #5 _____

How to Eat Well Without Gaining Pounds

Sure, having a few extra pounds provides a little insulation, but not many people really wants to gain weight just for the sake of keeping warm? And, during the winter and holidays, temptations abound when it comes to gaining weight. After all, most of the food-heavy holidays, like Christmas, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Kwanza and others usually occur sometime during the winter, or close to it. So, you do have the opportunity to put on a pound or two. And in doing so, you may feel a bit warmer.

But what happens when summer hits and you want to look great in a bikini, or take your shirt off during the dog days of summer?

You may feel warmer temporarily, but in the long-term, you will only sigh as you try to lose the weight you gained to stay cool during the spring and summer.

When it comes to warming your body, small amounts are just as helpful as larger portions. The key to staying warm AND eating warm foods is to take everything in moderation, and eat consistently (but healthily) throughout the day, which will actually get your metabolism going.

Rather than eat three large meals and heavy snacks during the day, why not try eating six smaller warming meals, with a cup of your favorite hot beverage between meals? This will help keep your inner furnace fired AND prevent you from gaining too much weight during the colder months.

You should also consider exercising more during winter, so you can boost a sluggish metabolism and keep warm at the same time. If you don't want to venture out-of-doors because of the cold air, then try some aerobic activity or yoga inside. Many yoga practitioners state it is possible to warm your internal body and regulate your temperature throughout the day by simply meditating.

Now that won't cost you a thing, just a small bit of time. Why not? It certainly can't hurt, and may save you a dime or two in the process.

Conclusions

Heating is sometimes something that comes from the inside out. If you want to reduce your heating expenses, then you have to find ways to heat your body AND heat your home. This guide contains a treasure chest full of ideas anyone can use to save money during the winter. Try a few out, see what you think and then come back for more.

Don't forget to keep a journal of what works and what doesn't for you. Remember, no two people are the same and no two homes are the same. You want to do what is best for you and your family.

This winter, stay warm, stay safe... and save up some money for a nice, sunny vacation!

Don't forget to check out the resources section where you'll find several links to sustainable energy programs and assistance for people interested in solar energy and other forms of sustainable energy that are environmentally friendly (and less costly) than traditional sources of energy.

Resources

Use the links provided below to learn more about energy efficiency, and discover tools and programs you can use to health “weatherize” your home, as defined by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Remember, any season is a good season to weather proof your home.

U.S. Department of Energy/Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Weatherization & Intergovernmental Program

<http://www.eere.energy.gov/wip/>

This program is committed to researching and providing consumers and industries with renewable energy resources, focusing on the U.S. and on global institutions. Here you will find information on the “weatherization assistance program” and other state energy programs. Learn everything you need to know to cut costs and take advantage of renewable energy.

U.S. Department of Energy/Weatherization

<http://www.energy.gov/energyefficiency/weatherization.htm>

Find out what weatherization is and how it affects you and your home. You can also take advantage of links provided to assist individuals and companies looking to weatherize or winter proof their homes and offices using renewable energy, a lasting resource.

Energy Information Administration (EIA)

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/mer/contents.html>

Here you will find monthly energy statistics provided by the EIA, a division of the U.S. government. The EIA produces a monthly review called the MER, providing information on monthly energy statistics including energy prices, energy production and energy use in homes and in the business sector.

Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov/>

Conduct a search for energy saving tips provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Here you will learn how to shop for smart, energy saving appliances that can lower your heating bills by hundreds of dollars.

Energy Star

<http://www.energystar.gov>

This is a site dedicated to providing information and links to energy efficient products, which can result in savings up to 90 percent every year. Look for qualified products with the Energy Star logo. You can find furnaces, heating pumps, programmable thermostats (which will save your oodles) and much more! You can also contact them by phone: 1-888-STAR-YES for more information about saving on heating costs during the winter. As an added bonus, this site frequently posts coupons and discount offers consumers can take advantage of to buy products or appliances for their home that will save energy.

Energy Star Home Energy Yardstick

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_improvement.hm_improvement_index

This test, provided by Energy Star, will help you calculate just how much you can save by implementing some of the tools and suggestions offered in this guide. You will need to keep a copy of a year's worth of utility bills or average them to complete the test. Find out just how energy efficient your home can be using this handy test. Just scroll down to the "analyze your home's energy use" section. You can also use this link to hire someone to personally inspect your home and identify places where heat may escape, or appliances that need updating. While this will cost you a little more money in the beginning, you will quickly realize with time you save a lot more than you initially spend on energy efficient equipment.