



10

Easy Things You Can Do Today to increase your home's Energy-Efficiency

1. **Capture the Sun-** During Spring, Winter and Fall on sunny days that will not warm above the mid-70's open the blinds on all east, west and especially south windows in the morning and close them at sunset. This passive solar energy can cut your heating costs by 10% to 100% -on warm days. NOTE: In summer, close your blinds and windows during the day –to keep heat out- and after sunset open blinds and windows to allow Colorado's cool night air to help cool your home.
2. **Window Coverings that Insulate-** Investing in window coverings such as Window Quilts or Silhouette blinds that have at least an R-3 value are even better than new high-performance windows so long as you use them to keep heat in during winter nights and keep it out during summer days. In a typical Colorado home, this can easily save \$50-100/year, while making you more comfortable.
3. **Attic Insulation: A blanket for your home-** Your home should have at least R-30 in the Front-Range, R-38 in the mountains and even go as high as R-50. To have R-30 you need 12" of blown fiberglass or 8.25" of cellulose. If you have fiberglass batts they should have the R-value printed on them. If you are going to add insulation, blown insulation is best. Depending on how much insulation you currently have, you will often save \$100's/year by adding more insulation.
4. **Wall Insulation: If it's not there, it's like wearing a hat while the rest of you is bare-** Check your wall's insulation by drilling a small hole in an exterior wall, such as inside of a closet, and probing in with something like a bamboo skewer. If you don't feel anything you probably have no insulation. If your house was built before 1980, the odds are, unfortunately, good that you have no insulation. Insulation companies can fill your walls with cellulose or fiberglass via 2" diameter holes –without removing your drywall. If you have no insulation, you'll easily save \$100's of dollars/year by adding the insulation.
5. **Weatherstrip & Caulk: Eliminate drafts by zippering-up your home-** Applying weatherstripping on the perimeter of your attic hatch and at any place where an older window opens or where you can see daylight around a door will stop drafts that make you shiver on a cold winter's night, but also as you write-out your utility bill. Applying caulk –I recommend latex because it has many fewer Volatile Organic Compound (VOCs) pollutants- at areas where windows and doors meet the drywall, at the perimeter of bath fans or recessed lights,

around the perimeter of electric outlets, etc. will further keep Ol'-man Winter outside. Investing \$10-20 and a weekend afternoon will often save \$10-20/year.

6. **Compact Florescent Bulbs (CFLs): The Light Bulb Thomas Edison could only dream about-** CFLs are the light bulb of the 21st Century. They require only ¼ the energy to provide the same amount of light, and they last 10 times longer. If you only want to change a light bulb every 7-10 years instead of every 7-10 months this is the bulb for you. Also, if you use a light-bulb 4 hours every day a CFL will cost you only \$4/year instead of \$16/year for an incandescent. If you switch out all high use bulbs (kitchen, front porch, reading lamps, etc.) this can save \$100+/year. Manufacturers such as GE and Sylvania offer CFLs for \$10 (which you'll save in the first year) that have much "warmer" color renderings than old-fashioned florescent bulbs.
7. **Use a Progammmable Thermostat, Change your Furnace Filter and have a Furnace Tune up: Monthly maintenance and a yearly check-up go a long way –** Using a programmable thermostat to set back your temperature from 70 degrees to 64 degrees when you are asleep or away can cut your heating costs by 10% or more. Keeping a clean filter not only reduces dust and allergens in your home but by keeping a clear air path for your furnace you ensure that the furnace doesn't work so hard to heat your home. If the filter is too dirty the furnace the fan needs to run longer to heat the home –thus requiring more energy- but also can wear-out equipment by as much as 25% faster. Also, having a certified furnace technician perform an annual inspection of the temperature rise and flow rate of the furnace ensures your utility bills don't skyrocket nor that your home's room that is furthest from the furnace is not uncomfortable.
8. **Insulate your water heater and pipes: A blanket for the water heater keeps the heat where you want it; in the tank-** Adding at least R-6.9 fiberglass to the water heater tank –which costs \$10-15- will save \$10-25/year. Adding R-2 foam pipe wrap to the first few feet of both the hot and cold water pipes coming off of the water heater will cost maybe \$5 and will save you close to \$5 every year.
9. **Low Flow water fixtures: save energy while saving water-** Installing shower heads that are at no more than 2.5 gallons/minute and sink fixtures that are 1.5 gallons/minute or less can cut your water consumption in half! Since 10-25% of the water consumed in a typical home is hot water, this results in considerable energy savings. If your showerheads or fixtures are older than 1995, it is very likely that you are using much more water then you need. These measures will save \$10-25/year in energy costs, but during a time of drought the water saved can bring relief that is comparable to soaking summer rain.
10. **Energy Audit or Rating: a blueprint to energy savings and reduced environmental impact-** To ensure you really know where to start to save the most money and have the greatest benefit for the environment; a visit from a Lightly Treading House-Doctor for an Audit or Rating will direct on your way.

To learn more please see our web-site at www.lightlytreading.com or call us at 303-733-3078