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10 tips to reduce energy costs

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RepairClinic.com®, the online store for replacement parts for home appliances, outdoor power equipment and heating and cooling equipment, has 10 tips to reduce energy consumption and monthly heating bills.

1. Use the sunshine. Pull back the drapes and open the blinds during the day. Sunshine provides natural warmth. At night, close the window coverings to combat drafts and prevent heat from radiating out through the windows.

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2. Replace the furnace air filter. A furnace's air filter should be replaced at least every six months. Dusty environments may require more frequent replacement. A clean filter will improve air flow to the entire house.

3. Check for vent blockage. Make sure furniture, rugs and curtains are not obstructing air flow at vents and registers. Also check to be sure the register dampers are open.

4. Schedule professional air duct cleaning.

Clean ducts help the air to flow more freely. Air duct cleaning should happen every few years or more frequently if home occupants have allergies.

5. Replace worn weatherstripping around doors and windows. A significant amount of heat will escape from even a minimal crack.

6. Check attics and other locations for air loss and add insulation as needed. Home improvement stores sell several types of insulation. Remember that all attics should be vented to the outside. Be sure not to block the outdoor vents.

7. Cover windows with clear, plastic film. Window-insulating kits are available for fewer than \$20 at hardware stores.

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"Plastic film has a significant impact on the room temperature," said Chris Hall, RepairClinic.com president and co-founder. "It reduces convection currents which cause drafts. Modern film is as clear as glass."

8. Inspect ductwork for air leaks and seal with foil duct tape. Be sure to use aluminum foil-type duct tape, not the common, gray duct tape, on ductwork.

9. Keep fireplaces closed if not in use. Glass doors and the flue should always be kept closed when the fireplace is not in use.

10. Lower the thermostat temperature and dress in layers.

"Many people are accustomed to wearing summer-weather clothing in their homes," said Hall. "Wearing sweaters and socks will go a long way in making you feel warmer and will enable you to lower the thermostat's temperature by at least a few degrees without notice."

RepairClinic.com® makes fixing things easy for millions of people. Founded in 1999, it's North America's online store with replacement parts for outdoor power equipment, major household appliances and HVAC equipment.

Free repair resources, including more than 1,400 how-to videos, empower people to fix stuff on their own. One million parts for 160 brands are stocked at its 86,000-square-foot facility in Canton. Visit RepairClinic.com for more information.

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