

## Home Energy Audit

After paying the winter heating bills, it may be time for a home energy audit.

Try some of the methods listed below to find out just where the energy is escaping from your home. Armed with some information, you can take steps that might help you put more money into your savings account.



To begin your energy audit, grab a pad of paper and a pen and take notes as you travel throughout the house. Keeping track of problem areas will help when it comes time to formulate your energy-saving plan.

The first thing to do is to check for air leaks or drafts. These can increase your home energy expenses by 5 to 30 percent. Check windows and doors for air leaks. See if you can rattle them, since movement means there is room for air to enter and escape. Follow this rule of thumb: If you can see daylight around a window or door, it definitely has a leak. You may want to consider replacing old, drafty doors and windows with new, more energy-efficient

ones. If replacing doors and windows, be sure to select a product that will allow you to take advantage of the tax credit (visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) for details). But if replacing doors and windows is not an option right now, plastic sheeting over the windows will help and can be found at your local hardware or home improvement store.

Here are some other areas to check that are often prone to drafts:

- Electrical Outlets
- Switch plates
- Window frames
- Baseboards
- Weather stripping around doors
- Fireplace dampers
- Attic hatches
- Door-mounted mail slots

Moving to the outside of your house, be sure to check exterior corners and areas where the foundation and the bottom of the exterior brick or siding meet. If you find cracks or holes in the mortar, foundation or siding, these openings need to be sealed with the correct material. While you're checking the exterior of your home, look at the caulking around doors and windows and re-caulk if necessary. Also check to make sure your exterior storm doors seal tightly.