

# 3 Ways to Get Your Home Ready for Winter

**News flash:** Cold weather is right around the corner. Your first priority? Preparing your house for plummeting temperatures. A few key steps can add up to major savings, which will come in handy considering that the average American household spends \$1,900 annually on energy bills, according to ENERGY STAR®—and that number could increase by as much as 50 percent this year.

**1 Seal.** Air escapes from leaks located all over your home—so much so that in the average house it's like having an open window all year. Hunt down and seal leaks to reduce your energy bills by as much as 20 percent. Begin by weather-stripping or caulking around windows and doors, ductwork, and floor vents. Pay special attention to the attic and basement. In addition, caulk around items such as plumbing pipes, gas pipes, electrical wiring, and dryer vents where they enter the house.

**2 Insulate.** Properly insulating your home ensures the heat you pay for stays inside. To determine the right insulation R-value for your location, visit [www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/insulation.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/insulation.html). Then begin by insulating the attic, where the most heat is lost. If your foundation walls aren't insulated, it's a good idea to tackle them as well.

**3 Maintain.** Proper maintenance of your heating system ensures it operates as efficiently as possible, which can lower your energy bills as much as 10 percent. Before you begin using your heating system, have it inspected by a licensed professional. And be sure to change your HVAC filter every month or two to maximize heating efficiency.

