

10 SIMPLE WEEKEND PROJECTS TO SAVE BIG MONEY

- 1 Gaps and cracks:** When sealing smaller air leaks to keep air-conditioned or heated air inside your home, caulks and foam sealants are the products for you:
 - Gaps up to 1/2": Caulk
 - Gaps between 1/2" and 5/8": Backer rod and caulk
 - Gaps over 5/8": Foam sealants
- 2 Windows:** You can quickly seal around windows using caulk and weather-strip tape. You can also apply window film in the winter; and use light-colored blinds or drapery to reflect heat from the sun during the summer. If considering replacing your windows, ensure your selection is ENERGY STAR® certified.
- 3 Doors:** As with windows, sealing around doors is quick and easy. Use caulks and weather-stripping to seal the perimeter of the door, and install a threshold to prevent air from leaking in or out from under the door.
- 4 Thermostats:** Invest in a 5/2-day programmable thermostat and keep heat-generating appliances several feet away, such as lamps and entertainment centers. If you do not have central air, window air-conditioners (with an AC cover) used in conjunction with ceiling fans are an easy solution to cooling your home in the summer.
- 5 Ceiling fans:** An inexpensive way to make a room feel seven degrees cooler in the summer (set fan to rotate counterclockwise), or warmer in the winter (set fan to a low, clockwise rotation when your heat is turned on).
- 6 Hot water:** An easy way to keep your hot water at the right temperature without using lots of additional energy is to wrap your hot water heater with an insulating jacket and hot water pipes with insulating pipe foam. Be sure to follow the directions for your model type (gas, oil or electric heater).
- 7 Basements:** In unfinished basements, the joint between the top of the basement wall and the wooden frame is a common place for air leaks, as it is above ground on the exterior of the wall. This can be sealed by using an all-purpose sealant. Also ensure that all basement windows are properly sealed (see tip #2).
- 8 Ducts:** Heating and cooling accounts for approximately half of your energy bill. Using sealant or metal tape, seal and insulate air leaks in all ducts, especially those in attics, basements, garages and crawl spaces. Ensure the joints where the ducts connect to vents and registers are sealed. Also, to have your HVAC system maximize its efficiency, change your HVAC filter regularly.
- 9 Attics:** This area of the home often offers the biggest energy-saving opportunity. Seal and insulate your attic properly using fiberglass rolls, foam sealant and other materials in these areas: behind and under kneewalls, wall-to-floor joints and dropped soffits. Also use high-temperature caulk and flashing to seal around chimneys. Attic stairway caps are an easy and quick way to keep the heated air inside your home's living space from rising into the attic.
- 10 Natural shade:** Planting trees or large shrubs around your home can provide shade and will prevent the hot sun from heating up your home in the summer. Shade east- and west-facing windows and air conditioning units (be sure not to block airflow with foliage). Consult a landscaping professional before planting to prevent future damage to your home's foundation.

