

*Energy-wise Checklist*



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# Energy-wise Checklist

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By using energy wisely, you can increase the comfort of your home, help protect the environment and better manage your energy costs.

Use this booklet to analyze and improve your home's energy efficiency.

First, to get an overall energy picture of your home, answer the following Quick Quiz:



## What is your thermostat setting?

Score

### 1. In winter during the day:

Score 6 points if your setting is 68° or less.

Score 5 points if your setting is 69°.

Score 4 points if your setting is 70°.

Score 3 points if your setting is 71°.

Score 2 points if your setting is 72°.

Score 1 point if your setting is 73°.

Score 0 points if your setting is 74° or more.

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### 2. On winter nights:

Score 10 points for setting your thermostat at 60° or less.

Score 9 points if your setting is 61°.

Score 8 points if your setting is 62°.

Score 7 points if your setting is 63°.

Score 6 points if your setting is 64°.

Score 5 points if your setting is 65°.

Score 0 points if your setting is for no setback.

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**What is your thermostat setting? Score****3. In summer, if you use an air conditioner:**

Score 6 points if you set your thermostat at 80°.

Score 5 points if you set your thermostat at 79°.

Score 4 points if you set your thermostat at 78°.

Score 3 points if you set your thermostat at 77° or lower.

Score 6 points for having no air conditioning. \_\_\_\_\_

**Is your house drafty? Score**

To check drafts, you can hold a tissue where windows and doors meet their frames.

**4. If the tissue doesn't move, there is no draft around your windows. Score**

Score 10 points. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. If there is no draft around your doors, score 5 points. \_\_\_\_\_****6. If you keep your fireplace or woodstove damper closed to block the air flow when it's not in use, score 6 points. \_\_\_\_\_**

Score 6 points if you have no fireplace. \_\_\_\_\_

**7. If you have storm windows or high-efficiency, insulating windows, score 10 points. \_\_\_\_\_****8. If you have storm doors or a vestibule, score 5 points. \_\_\_\_\_****Is your house insulated? Score****9. If you have 6 inches or more in your attic, \_\_\_\_\_**

score 20 points. If you have 2 to 4 inches, score 10 points. \_\_\_\_\_

**10. If all exterior walls are insulated, score 10 points. \_\_\_\_\_****Is your floor insulated? Score****11. If there is an unheated space under your house and your floor is insulated, \_\_\_\_\_**

score 10 points. If you have a heated basement and the basement walls are insulated, score 10. \_\_\_\_\_

**Miscellaneous Score****12. Depending on your heating system, \_\_\_\_\_**

score 6 points if your oil burner system was serviced since last winter or you regularly change filters on your forced air system or you clean baseboard units on your baseboard heating system. \_\_\_\_\_

**13. If the water heater is adjusted to 140° \_\_\_\_\_**

or lower, score 6 points. If above 140°, score 0. \_\_\_\_\_

**► NOW ADD LINES 1 – 13 TO GET YOUR QUICK QUIZ TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_****What Your Score Means**

**90 or above:** Congratulations! You're already making energy-wise decisions in your home. But read on for even more tips.

**76 to 89 points:** There are some simple things you can do to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Read on.

**75 or under:** There's much room for improvement. Look at the quiz again. The areas where you scored the fewest points may also be the best places to start.

## Action List

**Use your Quick Quiz to identify which areas of your home need immediate attention.**

**Then consult the appropriate checklists in this booklet for specific actions you can take to improve the energy efficiency of your home.**

**Most recommendations involve no cost. Others could involve some investment, but these improvements will help you manage your energy costs more effectively and may pay for themselves in a short time.**



## Heating and Cooling Systems

### Heating

- Have your heating and cooling systems inspected annually by a professional. Inefficient heating and cooling systems can increase fuel consumption.
- Hire a qualified specialist to inspect your chimney, flues and vents to ensure they are clear and working properly.
- Check for and eliminate leaks in duct work. Leaks can usually be repaired easily and inexpensively with duct tape available at most hardware stores.
- Insulate ducts and pipes that run through unheated areas.
- Replace or clean furnace and air conditioner filters when they get dirty or once every month.



### Cooling

- Consider using window fans.
- If you buy an air conditioner, check energy efficiency ratios (EER) of models on the market. The higher the EER rating, the more efficient the unit and the less it costs to run.
- Be sure your outside air conditioning condenser is shaded from the sun. If it's not installed in a shady area, create shade with a tree or fence. Avoid using bushes that may block the flow of air around the cooling unit.

# Living Areas

## Heating Your Living Areas

- Set your thermostat at 65° during the day to reduce your heating use by as much as 15%.
- Lower your thermostat at night either manually or automatically with a setback thermostat.
- Weatherstrip windows near your thermostat and keep them tightly closed. A cold draft across the thermostat will turn your heating system on unnecessarily.
- Keep heating supply and return registers and radiators clean and unobstructed by furniture and draperies.
- Close all heat registers in unused rooms. (CAUTION: To protect pipes in these rooms, make sure the temperature stays above freezing.)
- Close the fireplace damper when not in use.
- To keep air from leaking under a door, roll up a small rug and place it across the bottom of the doorway.
- Open draperies on south-facing windows during the day to let in free heat from the sun and close them at night or on cloudy days to keep the heat in.

## Cooling Your Living Areas

- Set your air conditioning thermostat at 78° or higher during the cooling season. Each degree above 75° saves you 3% of the energy used to cool your home.
- When using air conditioning, only cool the rooms you need. Close doors to other rooms.

- Turn your air conditioner off when you leave home.
- Help keep your home and yourself cool by using natural ventilation and wearing light clothing.
- Close your draperies and shades on hot, sunny days to reduce solar heat build-up.
- Close windows and doors during the hottest parts of the day.

## Lights and Appliances

- Turn off unused lights, stereos, televisions, computers, etc.
- During the day, use as few lights as necessary. Let daylight do the work.
- Keep light bulbs and shades dust-free. Dust absorbs light.
- Use three-way bulbs where possible and choose the wattage or amount of light for your needs.
- Use a concentrated light for tasks like reading, sewing or cooking.
- Use fluorescent, rather than incandescent, fixtures and bulbs where possible. Fluorescent lights are three to four times more energy efficient.
- Consider energy efficiency by painting walls and ceilings light colors. Light colors reflect rather than absorb light, thus reducing the need for extra lighting.
- With incandescent lighting, use one high-wattage bulb rather than several low-wattage bulbs. Replace on-off switches with solid-state dimmer switches to better control lighting and efficiency.

# The Kitchen

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## Your Refrigerator

- Locate your refrigerator in a cool spot with good air circulation and away from heat sources like direct sunlight, your kitchen range and heat vents.
- Open and close the refrigerator door quickly and infrequently.
- Carefully select a refrigerator/freezer with energy-saving features. Units with the Energy Star® label are among the most efficient. Be aware that manual-defrost freezers use up to 30% less energy than units that defrost automatically.
- If you have a manual-defrost freezer, be sure to defrost regularly. You should not allow a build-up of more than 1/4" of ice. Check your owner's manual for specific instructions.
- Avoid putting hot foods in the refrigerator.
- Clean your refrigerator's condenser coils regularly.
- Use your refrigerator optimally. A full but not tightly-packed refrigerator is most efficient.
- Inspect the seals on your refrigerator, freezer and oven doors to ensure that they fit tightly. Simply place a lighted flashlight inside the appliance. If you see light around the gasket after the door is closed, replace the gasket.

## Your Range

- When cooking small meals, use only small electric appliances.
- When necessary, pre-heat your oven for no more than 10 minutes.
- Carefully plan your use of the oven. When possible, avoid using range burners that are less efficient than a closed oven. A complete meal can be cooked in the oven as economically as one food item.
- Resist peeking into the oven. Every time you open the door, you lose heat.
- Check all range burners. If the flame on your natural gas stove burns with a yellow rather than a clear blue flame, improper combustion is occurring. Something may be clogging the burner outlets or burner air inlets. Turn off the natural gas, remove the burner and clean these areas with a wire pipe cleaner and vacuum cleaner. If this doesn't improve the color of the flame, call a service person.
- Use flat-bottomed pans with covers and match the size of the pots and pans to the size of your burners. Also, minimize the amount of water in pans and use the lowest heat setting needed.

## Other Kitchen Appliances

- Use the dishwasher only when full. In addition, let clean dishes air dry.
- Install a flow restrictor in the kitchen sink faucet to reduce the use of hot water.
- Use cold water rather than hot when operating your food disposer.

## The Bath



- Take showers rather than baths. A typical shower requires only half as much hot water as an average bath.
- Use your bath and kitchen exhaust fans sparingly. In just one hour they can remove a houseful of warmed or cooled air.
- Repair all leaky faucets. One drop per second can waste as much as 10 gallons of water in a week. If the water is hot, you lose not only the water but also the energy used to heat the water.
- Install water flow restrictors on your shower heads and faucets to reduce your water use.

## The Laundry

- Wash clothes in hot water only when necessary. Always use cold water for rinsing.
- Operate washers and dryers with full loads to make best use of warm water or warm air. See the manufacturer's literature to determine the maximum load.
- Clean the lint screen on your dryer after each use to keep it running efficiently. Also check the dryer exhaust periodically to be sure it is not blocked.
- Don't overdry clothes in the dryer.
- Hang your laundry outdoors to dry. The fewer times you use your clothes dryer, the less energy you'll use.
- Turn your iron off a few minutes before you're finished ironing. Residual heat will finish the job.

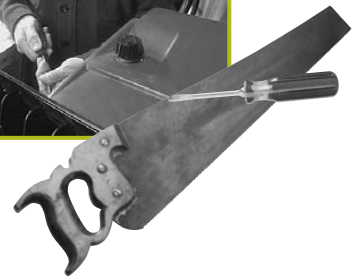


## *The Attic*

- Insulate your attic. Homes heated by natural gas and oil should have at least six inches (R-19) and for homes heated by electricity, you should have at least 12 inches (R-36).
- Insulate and weatherstrip your attic door.
- Install a vapor barrier in your attic to reduce the flow of moisture from inside your home through the insulation. This reduces condensation that can lower insulation efficiency. When installing vapor barriers, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Vent your attic appropriately. When adding insulation, you may have to add ventilation as well. As a general rule, you need one square foot of free ventilating area for each 150 square feet of attic floor area. Keep attic vents clear of debris such as insulation, tree limbs, bird nests, etc.

## *The Basement*

- Caulk or seal all cracks in masonry walls.
- Insulate basement walls, especially those portions above the ground, and the rim joist where the basement ceiling joists meet the foundation wall.
- Insulate between floor joists over unheated areas.
- Insulate crawl spaces under heated areas.
- In your workshop, use hand tools whenever possible. Maintain power tools in top operating condition.



## *The Water Heater*

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- Periodically remove sediment that builds up in the bottom of your water heater. Draining water until it appears clear removes sediment and improves your water heater's efficiency. (Follow manufacturer's instructions.)
- Set the temperature on low (120°) and use warm instead of hot water for washing clothes and dishes. However, a temperature lower than 120° may result in increased detergent use. (Note: Dishwashers without booster heaters may require a water temperature of 140°. (Check manufacturer's instructions.)
- Insulate your electric water heater. If it feels warm to the touch, you may not have enough insulation. You can wrap the sides with an insulation blanket to reduce heat loss. This insulation could reduce energy use by 5% to 8%.
- NYSEG customers – if your electric water heater's capacity is 80 gallons or larger, you may benefit by heating water at night (11:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. Eastern Standard Time) using NYSEG's optional day-night or time-of-use service. For more information, visit [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) or call us.
- Ensure maximum efficiency of your oil-fired water heater. Have a qualified service person inspect the flame, damper, and stack temperature.
- If you'll be away from home for a period of time, turn off your water heater. For an electric water heater, turn off the circuit breaker or remove the fuse. If you have a natural gas water heater, turn the setting to "pilot."

## *Protect the Exterior*

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- Small cracks cause big heat losses. Caulk around the frames of all your windows and exterior doors.
- Replace or repair dried and cracked window putty. Also replace, patch or tape cracked or broken panes of glass to reduce air leakage and drafts.
- If you have single-pane windows, install storm windows on every window in your home and storm doors on all exterior doors.
- Locate your trees, shrubs and fences to provide maximum shade, wind and sun protection. Trained nursery personnel can help you design a landscape plan with energy efficiency in mind.

USE ENERGY SAFELY & WISELY



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