



EARTH CARE @LEWINSVILLE

CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION BY SAVING ENERGY

A home energy assessment, or audit, is perhaps the best way to identify where your home is losing energy and help you prioritize improvements that will increase energy efficiency. You can do an audit yourself, but a qualified professional will likely provide a more comprehensive review, utilizing diagnostic tools unavailable to most of us. The U.S. Department of Energy offers helpful information about professional and DIY energy audits, and how to locate qualified professionals in your area as well as guidance on related topics such as weatherizing, heating/cooling systems, water heating, insulation, and finding leaks:

<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-assessments>

Whether or not you undertake a full energy assessment, here are some relatively simple actions you can take right away to reduce your energy usage this winter:

- Seal leaks with weatherstripping or caulk. Inspect your home for leaks (local public libraries loan thermal imaging camera kits to help with this). Pay attention to junctures between walls and ceilings, around vents and fans, and where dryer vents pass through walls, around doors, window frames and electrical outlets. Check attic hatches and around your heating and cooling equipment.
- Maintain heating and cooling systems. Annual HVAC tune-ups by a licensed technician help prevent breakdowns and maximize energy efficiency. Replace air filters as needed.
- Adjust your thermostat. A good winter goal is 68 degrees during the day, and lower at night. Install a programmable or smart thermostat to automatically lower the temperature when you are asleep or away. Wear warm clothing and have lap blankets on hand for when you're inactive.
- Utilize the sun. Open curtains and blinds on sunny winter days to capture warmth; close them when it's dark to insulate against cold night air.
- Close doors and vents in unused rooms. Don't waste energy heating/cooling a room you rarely enter.
- Appliances and electronics. When replacing, choose Energy Star certified models to assure efficiency. Unplug items not in use to prevent "phantom" loads.



Figure 1-Shutterstock Image

- Water temperature. Set your water heater thermostat at 120 degrees. If you have an older, uninsulated model, install an insulating jacket. Wash your clothes using a cold-water setting.
- Efficient lighting. Replace incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. Turn off lights when you are not using them. Install sensors, dimmers, or timers where appropriate.

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