

# DIY HOME ENERGY AUDIT TIPS



## DID YOU KNOW...

DIY Energy Audit Kits may be available to borrow from a local library.

**Making a home energy efficient doesn't have to be complicated or expensive and can save money on utility bills**

A home energy audit can identify hidden leaks, reduce energy waste, and uncover safety hazards.

## Identify and seal air leaks

Drafts let heat escape, making your heating or cooling systems work harder. Rooms that feel warmer or cooler than others at the same thermostat setting may have poor insulation that would benefit from an upgrade.

### Inside

Feel around doors, windows, baseboards, wall-ceiling joints, light fixtures, and electrical outlets for hot or cold spots. Examine for any cracks or gaps that could let air in or out.

### Outside

Inspect around pipes, cables, and vents. Look for gaps or damage that lets air to escape.

**Tip:** Sealing drafts with caulking or weather stripping could save on heating and cooling costs.

## Detect and fix water leaks

Even small leaks can increase your water bill or cause costly damage, such as mold. Make sure to compare water bills over time; unexpected increases may indicate hidden leaks.

### Faucets and toilets

Cover a faucet with a water balloon overnight—collected water indicates a leak. Add a few drops of food coloring to the toilet tank; colour in the bowl within 10 minutes signals a leak.

### Inside

Look for wet spots, mold, or stains on walls, floors, and ceilings.

### Outside

Inspect hoses, outdoor faucets, and sprinklers for drips.

**Tip:** Fix small leaks with help from your local hardware store. Call a plumber for persistent or serious leaks. Renters should notify the landlord.

## Review and maintain appliances

Remember to schedule annual tune ups for major appliances like Air Conditioners. Well-maintained appliances run more efficiently, last longer, and can reduce energy consumption.

Keep appliance vents, coils, and filters clean to improve efficiency, prevent overheating, and extend their lifespan.

Listen for unusual noises, inconsistent heating, unresponsive thermostats, and pilot light issues.

Watch out for “energy vampires”: devices that draw power even when turned off.

**Tip:** Use smart power strips or unplug devices to reduce phantom energy use. If replacing an appliance, look for ENERGY STAR ratings and EnerGuide information to help choose the most efficient products.

## Audit your lighting

Well-maintained appliances run more efficiently, last longer, and can reduce energy consumption.

Check for unused or rarely used lights and consider installing timers or motion sensors to cut energy waste.

Schedule annual tune ups for major appliances like Air Conditioners.

Use timers, photocells, and dimmers to save electricity.

**Tip:** On average LED lightbulbs use less energy than old incandescent bulbs.



# DIY HOME ENERGY AUDIT

# AIR LEAKS



**A home energy audit can identify hidden leaks, reduce energy waste, and uncover safety hazards.**

As the audit is completed, take notes on what's found. These observations will help prioritize the most important improvements to save money and increase comfort. Whether completing repairs yourself, or deciding to hire help, you will be aware of potential issues.

Air leaks cause heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer, increasing energy use and cost. Drafts let heat escape, making your heating or cooling systems work harder. Rooms that feel warmer or cooler than others at the same thermostat setting may have poor insulation that would benefit from an upgrade.

## How to check for leaks

Move your hand around the edges of exterior doors, windows, bathroom and kitchen vents, and fans. If you feel air moving or a temperature difference, there's likely a leak.

Tools like an infrared thermometer or thermal camera can locate smaller or hidden leaks, or try the incense test outlined here:

1. on a cold, windy day, turn off your furnace and close all windows and exterior doors
2. turn on bathroom and kitchen fans to create negative pressure
3. light incense and slowly move it around doors, windows, vents, and suspected leak points
4. if the smoke moves or is sucked in, you have found a draft

## Air leak detection checklist

- doors and windows: inspect frames, seals, weatherstripping
- baseboards: inspect where walls meet ceilings or floors
- light fixtures and ceiling fans
- electrical outlets and switches including exterior walls
- bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans
- fireplace dampers: check for a tight seal
- outside entry points for cables, pipes, and vents: Watch for cracks caused by freezing and thawing

## How to seal leaks

Once identified, seal leaks using caulking, weatherstripping, or plastic film, which can be found at local hardware stores. Proper sealing enhances comfort, reduces energy loss, and protects your home.



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## MAINTAIN APPLIANCES



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Well-maintained appliances run more efficiently and last longer which can help save money on utility bills, and appliance repair. If replacing an appliance, look for ENERGY STAR ratings and EnerGuide information to help choose the most efficient products.

## Washing Machine Tips

- use a mesh laundry bag to contain clothing with underwires
- empty pockets and close zippers to protect your machine and clothes
- Remove clothes promptly and leave the door open to prevent mold
- Clean the filter regularly
- Run an empty hot cycle with vinegar to get rid of mineral build up

## Clothes Dryer Tips

- clean the lint trap after every use to improve airflow and reduce fire risk
- vacuum the exhaust duct and exterior vents regularly to maintain air flow
- avoid overloading the dryer to ensure proper drying and save energy

## Fridge and Freezer Tips

- vacuum off the cooling coil to help air flow
- keep door seals clean and check for damage to maintain a tight seal
- prevent ice buildup by defrosting manual-defrost freezers

## Air Conditioner Tips

- replace filters and regularly vacuum the blower compartment
- lubricate the blower motor's accessible ports with electric motor oil
- clean the condensate drain line to prevent clogs



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## ENERGY VAMPIRES AND LIGHTING EVALUATION

A close-up of a dark grey or black electronic device, likely a smart meter or energy monitor. The screen displays several green circular icons with white symbols: a power button, a Wi-Fi signal, a battery, and a flame. The background is dark with some light reflections.



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**'Energy vampires'** are devices that draw small amounts of electricity even when turned off.

## Tips to reduce standby energy use

- unplug devices when not in use
- use a smart power strip that turns off power in standby mode
- look for low standby power ratings when buying new devices
- target use of high energy use appliances like portable air conditioners and space heaters

## Common energy vampires

- cellphone and laptop chargers
- computer monitors
- televisions
- video game consoles
- standby coffee makers
- electric toothbrushes
- small kitchen appliances

## Evaluate home lighting

Light bulbs, lighting usage, and lighting controls impact the energy consumed, and your energy bill.

- use natural light like windows and skylights to minimize the need for artificial light
- target lighting on specific areas or tasks instead of entire rooms or floors
- install lighting controls like dimmers or sensors to ensure light is used when needed
- consider lighter paint colours that reflect light back into the room
- choose ENERGY STAR rated products
- consider installing timers or motion sensors to cut energy waste
- perform regular maintenance



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# DIY HOME ENERGY AUDIT



# HEATING, COOLING, AND MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

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As the audit is completed, take notes on what's found. These observations will help prioritize the most important improvements to save money and increase comfort. Whether completing repairs yourself, or deciding to hire help, you will be aware of potential issues.

Regular checks on furnaces, air conditioners, and water heaters improve efficiency, safety, and longevity of your appliances. Routine maintenance helps keep the temperature comfortable and reduces the risk of breakdowns.

### Signs furnace or water heater maintenance may be needed:

1. unusual noises
2. inconsistent heating
3. unresponsive thermostats
4. dust buildup
5. pilot light issues



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## Notes:

## Furnaces

- Keep heating registers and air vents clean and free of dust or lint
- Check outdoor vents to ensure plants, snow or ice is not blocking airflow
- Check and replace filters every few months using the recommended MERV rating

## Water heater/hot water tank

- Check outdoor vents to ensure plants, snow or ice is not blocking airflow
- Insulate pipes connected to water heaters to reduce heat loss and improve efficiency



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