

# Winter's Coming: 5 Easy DIY Upgrades to Save Money & Energy This Year.

By [Will](#) - September 14th, 2011



[Installing an energy monitor - like this Blue Line Powercost monitor - won't save money itself, but can kick your family into conservation mode, and commonly leads to electricity savings of around 15%. \(Image credit: Energy Circle\)](#)

With cold weather just around the corner, now is the perfect time to whip your house into shape to save money on heating bills this year, while keeping your family extra cozy and healthy.

If you read our blog frequently, you'll know that we often recommend a [home energy audit](#) as the best first step toward tightening your house up for comfort and energy savings. (By way of disclaimer, we don't sell, offer, or have any direct financial incentive to recommend energy audits; we just know how important they are from a comfort, energy savings, and building durability & safety standpoint.)

But of course, maybe you've already had an audit conducted and haven't had time to have the recommended work completed yet. Or maybe you have, but want to do more. Or maybe you're just the DIY type. If any of the above, here are 5 easy home energy upgrades that you can do yourself, and that will keep your family more comfortable this year, while keeping more cash in your pocket:

## 1) Insulate your water heater.

15-20% of the average American home's energy consumption goes toward heating water. Although the amount of money you end up paying for hot water depends on the efficiency of your water heater and the amount of hot water you use, one sure-fire way to [reduce your water heating bills](#) is to make sure that your water heater and the hot-water-carrying pipes around it are insulated.

## **2) Seal holes and cracks in the basement.**

Air sealing is probably the most important step you can take to decrease your home's energy consumption, keep it more comfortable year-round, and save money on heating and cooling bills. While a comprehensive air sealing job requires a professional team, you can take on some of the most substantial air leaks yourself. The worst ones are often in the basement and attic; while attic leaks may be tough to access if you have already had insulation installed, cracks and gaps in the basement are an easy-access, no-brainer [DIY air sealing job](#).

## **3) Caulk around windows, doors & baseboards.**

Other easy places to air seal include the trim around windows and doors and baseboards. See our post about [air sealing to save money on heating bills this year](#) for more details about how to tackle seams between drywall and trim, and why these are important.

## **4) Put up storm windows.**

[Think you need new windows?](#) You might not. While new windows are sometimes a good thing -- if your current windows are total junk -- more often, you can achieve better results for a fraction of the cost of new windows by simply putting up good storm windows.

## **5) Monitor your energy use.**

So, [energy monitoring](#) by itself doesn't actually save energy, but installing an energy monitor in your house can lead to significant energy savings by constantly reminding you and your family of what's going on in your home. 15% savings on utility bills is a pretty common result of energy monitoring by means of the behavioral changes that it encourages. A simple, low-cost electricity monitor like the [Blue Line Powercost monitor](#) is a good place to start.

Other ideas for saving money on heating bills while keeping healthy and comfortable this year? Let us know.