

## WHEN TO CALL FOR HELP

**Most homeowners only call the repairman when their heating system breaks. But many of those calls could be avoided if the system is cleaned and maintained regularly.**

A regular checkup by a professional usually costs from \$100 to \$150. It saves you money in the long run by making your system efficient enough to cut up to 10 percent from your energy bill.

Oil-powered and kerosene heating systems should be serviced every year; gas-powered heating systems should be serviced every two years. Electric furnaces, heat pumps, and central air conditioning systems should also be serviced every two years.

### { For more information

The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy [www.aceee.org](http://www.aceee.org)

The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy [www.eere.energy.gov](http://www.eere.energy.gov)

Energy Star, a joint program of the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

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### KNOW YOUR ENERGY BILL



# HEATING YOUR HOME

Regular maintenance is the key to preventing future problems with your home's heating system – and to prevent unwanted costs. Dirt and neglect are the main reasons heating and cooling systems fail. With the average heating bill alone topping \$1,000, you have a lot to gain by making sure your system works properly.

## MAXIMIZING YOUR CURRENT HEATING SYSTEM

Heating systems professionals can take a number of steps to tune up your heating system. But before calling them in, do a bit of maintenance yourself.

# CHECK LIST

## YEARLY CHECKUP

Each year before the weather gets chilly, turn your furnace on for a few minutes to make sure it is working. It may give off a bad smell, which should go away quickly. If it doesn't, contact a repairman.

## Clean the Registers or Radiators

Make sure your registers (forced-air heating system) or your radiators (boiler-based system) are clean. Wipe them down with a damp cloth.

## Inspect the Furnace

Look for any soot or combustion residue around the furnace. Soot build-up means your furnace is not combusting properly. If you see soot build-up, call a furnace technician.

## Change the Filters

Every house circulates small amounts of airborne dust, which also circulates through the ducts in your house. Your furnace's filter cleans the air, but it needs to be cleaned or changed regularly. This is an important maintenance that you can do yourself.

## HOW TO CLEAN YOUR FURNACE FILTER

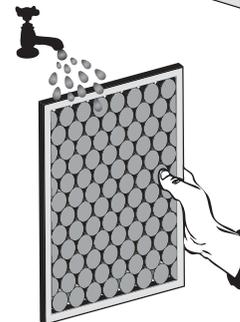
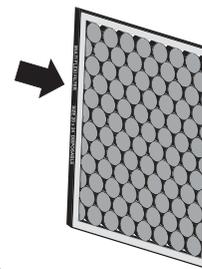
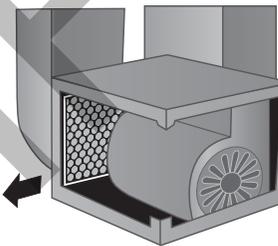
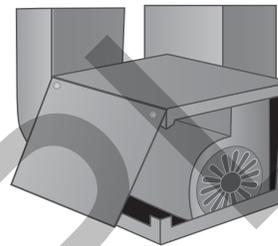
**STEP 1:** Make sure the furnace is turned off. This prevents the furnace from operating with no filter while you are changing it, and it keeps the fan from making it difficult to place the new filter into position.

**STEP 2:** Find the filter. It's usually well-marked, and most have a cover plate that is 18 to 24 inches long. Older furnaces sometimes don't have cover plates; their filters should be easy to see.

**STEP 3:** Remove the cover plate and slide the filter out of the tracks. This does not usually require any tools, although a few cover plates are fastened in place with small screws.

**STEP 4:** Check to see whether the filter is disposable, or if it is intended to be cleaned and replaced. This should be marked on the edge of the filter. If the filter is disposable, look for its size and make a note of it. Filters that are intended to be cleaned should have directions for cleaning printed on them.

**STEP 5:** If your old filter is disposable, throw it away. If it is cleanable, follow the directions given to clean it. Make sure to let the filter dry if you have rinsed it. Install the new or cleaned filter and replace the cover plate.



## PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT



One of the best ways to save on your home's heating bill is to control the temperature at which you keep the home. A programmable thermostat is the best way to do so, especially when you're away.

Look for a thermostat with the Energy Star rating. The program qualifies three types of thermostats: 7-day models, 5-2-day models, and 5-1-1-day models. 7-day models let you create different schedules for each day. The 5-2 models use separate schedules for weekdays and weekends. The 5-1-1 models let you have one schedule for weekdays and different schedules for Saturday and Sunday.

In the winter, save energy by setting the thermostat to 68 degrees while you are awake and then lower it while you are asleep or away from the house. In the summer, keep the house warmer than normal while you are away and set the thermostat to 78 degrees while you are home. If you need extra heating or cooling, use the manual override. It won't erase the preset schedule.