



## November: Lower your Thermostat

**Task:** Set your thermostat at least 2 degrees cooler in the winter.

Some people mistakenly believe that the energy savings from lowering the thermostat for a few hours are offset by the expense involved in reheating the house. Tests show that lowering your thermostat setting daily for intervals of four or more hours will reduce costs. – [Richard Beard, Utah State University](#)

**Advanced:** Set your thermostat to 68degrees during the day and 55degrees at night.

### Tips for dealing with lower temperatures:

- Wear extra layers! Sweaters and long johns do wonders keeping a body warm. Keeping your neck warm with a scarf or neck gaiter also makes a big difference. Fingerless gloves are good if you need to type or do other tasks with your hands.
- Stay active! Take breaks from sedentary activities to do something that requires movement.
- At night, sleep under blankets and comforters. Sleeping bags are particularly effective at trapping body heat so that you won't even notice chilly air around you. Use a [hot water bottle](#) or a [heated mattress pad](#) to provide localized warmth.
- Avoid using your fireplace. Unless you have a high-efficiency unit, a fireplace sucks warm air up the chimney and out of the building. The open flu allows cold air into your living space for hours after the warming flames are out.

**What you should know:**The following is excerpted from[Energy.gov](#).

- You can easily save energy in the winter by setting the thermostat to 68°F while you're awake and setting it lower while you're asleep or away from home. By turning your thermostat back 10°–15° for 8 hours, you can save about 5%–15% a year on your heating bill—a savings of as much as 1% for each degree if the setback period is eight hours long. The percentage of savings from setback is greater for buildings in milder climates than for those in more severe climates.
- In the summer, you can follow the same strategy with central air conditioning, too, by keeping your house warmer than normal when you are away, and lowering the thermostat setting to 78°F (26°C) only when you are at home and need cooling. Although thermostats can be adjusted manually,

programmable thermostats will avoid any discomfort by returning temperatures to normal as you wake or return home.

- **A common misconception** associated with thermostats is that a furnace works harder than normal to warm the space back to a comfortable temperature after the thermostat has been set back, resulting in little or no savings. This misconception has been dispelled by years of research and numerous studies. The fuel required to reheat a building to a comfortable temperature is roughly equal to the fuel saved as the building drops to the lower temperature. You save fuel between the time that the temperature stabilizes at the lower level and the next time heat is needed. So, the longer your house remains at the lower temperature, the more energy you save.
- If you have a **heat pump, electric resistance heating, steam heat, or radiant floor heating**, please check [here](#) for special considerations.

*The following is adapted from <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/10-thermostat-tips-save-money.html#>*

1. When you'll be out for an evening, turn down the thermostat. If you'll be away for a weekend or more, lower the thermostat to 55 F. You'll save on heating without risking a freeze-up of your water pipes.
2. Whenever you can lower your thermostat dramatically for a few days or more, you'll save a little on the operation of the [refrigerator](#) and freezer, which won't need to work so hard to maintain their cool.
3. How low can your thermostats be set? In many houses, 68 F is a comfortable norm. But many people find that they can get used to 63 or 64F during the day as well. Reduce the heat just 1 degree at a time and try it for a week. Each 1-degree drop for an eight-hour period reduces your fuel bill about one percent. Gradually, you might be able to go down 3 or even 4 degrees comfortably and [save a chunk of money](#).
4. Try turning down the thermostat 5 to 10 degrees at night, and then turn it up again in the morning when the coffee is brewing. If you can get used to that, you'll save 5 to 10 percent of your heating bill.
5. For greater ease and comfort, install a programmable set-back thermostat. They are available for most gas- and oil-fueled central heating systems. In this way, you can have the heat turned up before you get up in the morning and lowered [just as you get into bed](#). You may not even notice that you are setting back your thermostat. Most of these thermostats come with two setbacks. Therefore, you can also set back the thermostat for the hours when people are in school or at work.