

Planetary Wellbeing

Cut Pollution & Toxicity

- Cleaning & Laundry
- Green Carwash
- Low-Toxin Manufacturing
- Natural Garden & Lawn Care
- Organic & Sustainable Agriculture
- Pest Control
- Plant-Based Eating
- Zero Emissions
- Zero Toxin Parenting

Ensure Animal Wellness

Guard Water Resources

Ocean Awareness

Protect Biodiversity

Reduce Resource Consumption

Save Energy & Climate

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Professional Home Energy Auditing

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If you're looking for solutions for saving energy at home, the best place to start is to get a professional home energy assessment. Sometimes referred to as a home energy audit, the process involves hiring a certified professional to come to your home, poke around to see where you're **wasting energy**, and then hearing their advice for home improvements to boost the energy efficiency of your home. The pro will likely do a blower door test and use other assessment tools to get solid information about your home's energy consumption.

Improvements may include anything from increasing your insulation to replacing your furnace with a more efficient model. Each audit is customized to your location, building composition, and energy use patterns, making it a complex process. For those of us less technical types like many in our Hearts family, a professional home energy audit is the sure-fire way to get on the road toward a **green home plan**.

Quick Guide: Home Energy Use

- **Total residential climate contribution:** American homes account for 20% of all CO2 emissions and energy consumption in the country. [\[i\]](#)
- **Growing home energy emissions:** Statistics from 2007 show that residential CO2 emissions grew more than any other sector to a total of 1,242 megatons of carbon annually for the entire country. Energy efficiency improvements in residential and commercial buildings could cut annual emissions by 500 megatons by 2020. [\[ii\]](#)
- **Payback period for energy retrofits:** These will vary depending on your home and where you live, but insulation upgrades investments can see a payback of three to five years, while windows take more like 10 years to pay off. [\[iii\]](#)

Take Action! Home Energy Audits and Tax Incentives

1. **Obtain an audit from a certified new home advisor:** There are several ways to go about this, but your best bet is to consult the [ENERGY STAR New Homes Partner Locator](#) for your new home.
2. **Obtain an audit from a certified existing home professional:** The [Residential Energy Services Network \(RESNET\)](#) has a database of qualified home energy professionals including home energy auditors and air sealing contractors.
3. **Find federal energy tax credits and state tax incentives:** After receiving the recommendations from your auditor, consider your options in light of any financial incentives you can receive for improving the energy efficiency of your home. Today there are often financial incentives like tax credits and rebates you can access to help reduce the initial cost of your home energy improvements. The ENERGY STAR site has a [Federal Tax Credits for Consumer Energy Efficiency](#) breakdown. Find information on state and utility-specific incentives through the [Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency \(DSIRE\)](#) as well. Then use the Energy Saver's guide for [How to Claim Your Tax Credit](#) when it comes time to file with the IRS.
4. **Choose a qualified contractor:** Once you've determined which home energy improvements you want to make, be sure to select a qualified contractor from the government-endorsed [National Association of Energy Service Companies](#).

Dig Deeper: Home Energy Efficiency

- Use the [ENERGY STAR Home Energy Yardstick](#) to estimate how much energy your home uses and how it compares to other houses across the country. You'll need 12 months worth of utility bills and about five minutes to complete the process.
- Use the [ENERGY STAR Home Advisor database](#) to get some DIY energy saving recommendations for your home based on zip code and how you currently heat and cool your home.

References

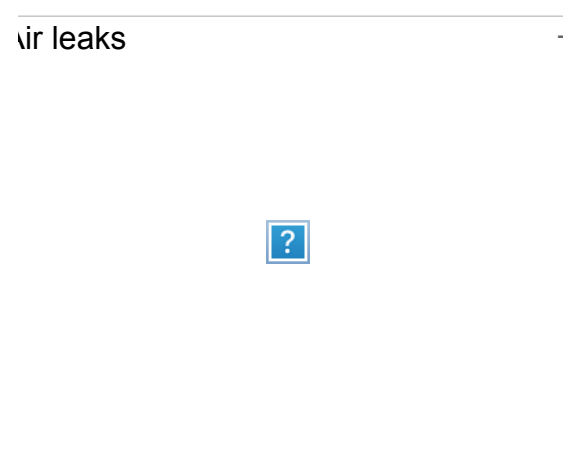
References

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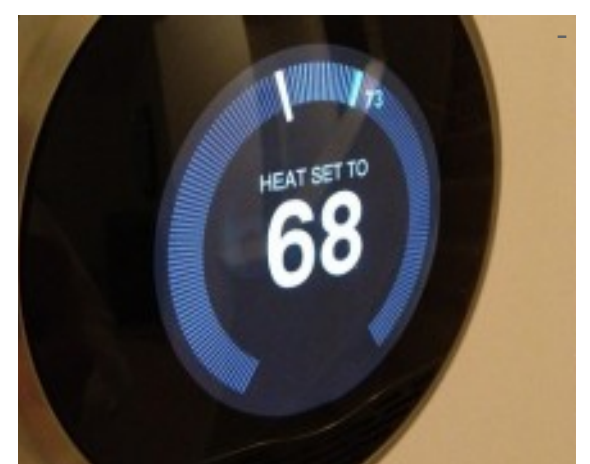
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