

Use these Weatherization Tips to Improve Energy Efficiency and Comfort in Your Older House

As the temperature begins to drop, there are many weatherization improvements homeowners can do to help keep cold winter air out and the warm heated air in. Often people think older homes are inherently colder, less comfortable and more expensive to heat – but they don't have to be. Weatherization is currently a big topic with all the “greening up” of our communities, but it is often misleading or unclear on the proper procedures to take when retrofitting an older home. There are many affordable weatherization solutions that also respect the character and irreplaceable original materials of your older home. With appropriate weatherization retrofits, old house living can be comfortable, warm and energy efficient. Homeowners can follow these suggested tips to live comfortably in their older home while improving its energy efficiency and maintaining its historic integrity.



1. Seal all cracks around window and door trim inside and out.
2. Weather strip all doors and windows.
3. Install foam insulation pads under electric cover plates on all outlets and switches.
4. Seal up the basement. Insulate bulkhead doors leading to the basement. Seal all cracks in the foundation wall, both inside and out.
5. Add insulation to attic floor and crawlspace and (unheated) basement ceilings. (Vapor barrier should always face the heated space.)
6. Make sure all attic door hatches are insulated and sealed.
7. Save your old windows! Improve efficiency by adding quality storm windows to single glazed windows. Make sure the storms are properly sealed and caulked and have weep holes at the sill to allow moisture to escape.
8. If finances are tight, at least add interior window film to improve efficiency of windows.
9. Add storm doors that help keep cold air out and are compatible with the home's architecture.
10. Wrap all hot water pipes and ducts. This will not only help with energy efficiency, but will keep condensation problems from developing on water pipes.
11. Keep your fireplace dampers shut tight when not in use! Fill the throat of the flue with insulation if the fireplace is never used.

12. Install programmable thermostats.
13. Clean baseboards and radiators periodically for better efficiency.
14. Have woodstoves inspected and cleaned annually for efficiency and safety.
15. Think twice about using large fireplaces on very cold nights. The damper will need to remain open even after the fire goes out, because of the hot coals, and you will have a substantial amount of heat loss up your chimney.
16. Have heating unit cleaned annually for best efficiency.
17. As you tighten up your house, monitor for increased relative humidity (RH) with a hygrometer, and use a dehumidifier if the RH rises above 50%.
18. A properly vented attic will keep the roof decking cold and prevent ice dams.
19. Build rigid foam boxes around bathroom ventilation fans in the attic, then insulate around the box.
20. Thoroughly seal all vents and pipes which penetrate the building envelope.
21. Add a door sweep to the interior basement door of an unheated basement to prevent cold basement air from entering the first floor of the house.
22. Area rugs can help reduce floor drafts and create a sense of warmth in a room.
23. Close interior doors to rooms not in use. Turn down the heat in those rooms as well.
24. Use door draft blockers at base of doors.
25. Keep warm by wearing a wool sweater!

Other helpful websites:

[National Trust Weatherization Guide](#)

Preservation Brief 3 – Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/3-improve-energy-efficiency.htm>

National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services -

<https://www.nps.gov/history/tps/sustainability/energy-efficiency/weatherization.htm>