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# HOUSE WISE

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## Utility Bills Too High? Warming Things Up for Fall

*By Elizabeth Guinn*

Once you have made the decision that the less electricity my house uses the better, just how do you go about making changes to cut cost? And which changes will get me the most bang for my buck?

The single best way to retrofit an aging home for energy efficiency is to boost the insulation and overall air tightness of the home. Since a home's heating and cooling costs can account for as much as 75% of the total utility costs, better insulation makes incredible sense. Homes built as recently as ten years ago do not have the level of insulation that the newer homes are being built with today. Not to mention that some types of insulation can compress over time losing the valuable air pockets that give it its insulating quality. While increasing the insulation in the walls is difficult, especially if you don't want to tear out all the drywall in you house, boosting insulation in you attic or

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*"The single best way to retrofit an aging home for energy efficiency is to boost the insulation"*

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## What We Are Up To

*By Dan Guinn*

Over the years I've been asked literally thousands of questions regarding home improvement and building. Lately I've been amazed at how many of the questions seem to be about saving money on utilities or other green building topics.

Since several of the questions seem to come up more than once, I figured there might be more people interested in some of the wisdom I have acquired from my years of experience. I've compiled several of the most frequently asked questions and will share them with you with the help of my wife Elizabeth over the coming months. Feel free to forward these news letters onto other people, we would love to increase our circulation. If you have a question of your own that you would like answered, by all means send it on. If I don't know the answer, I will do the research. Thanks for reading.

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crawlspace is definitely an option.

The cheapest method of increasing attic insulation is adding inches to what you already have. In a typical attic, the addition of a few inches of blown in insulation or an attic blanket could make a huge difference in overall energy efficiency. Crawlspace insulation can, overtime, even come lose or have been compromised by moisture or water damage or simply be non-existent in locations. A quick trip under the house by either you or an insulation contractor could go a long way to pointing out problem areas that need to be addressed.

A newer and much better form of attic and crawl space insulation is the spray foam type. I say better because standard fiber glass insulation results in an R-value of 3.2 per inch of insulation. Blown cellulose results in an R-value of 3.5 per inch. A polyurethane insulation sprayed in place offers an R-value of 7.0 per inch. A little bit can go a long way. What makes this type of insulation even better is that when it is sprayed onto your house there are no air gaps at all. All cracks and crevices and holes around pipes are completely sealed. No batting type insulation can come close to it.

Your crawl space is a great place to use spray insulation. The crawl space is great because the insulation is completely waterproof. No amount of moisture under your house is going to damage this insulation. In fact, if you already have a moisture problem due largely in part because your old bat type insulation has been wicking up the existing moisture under your house, the removal of the bat insulation and the installation of spray foam will kill of all forms of mold and mildew (due to the high heat of the liquid foam) as well as supply superior insulation.

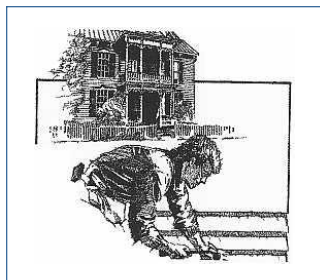
And if the crawl space is a great place the attic is even better. Just leave all the old insulation in tact and in place and add a nice thick coating of spray insulation applied directly to the underside of the plywood of your roof. This type of insulation would seal off all existing roof vents. This is preferable to the old stand by of a vented attic because the insulation holds the temperature of your attic space within 10 degrees of the temperature of your conditioned space. The greatest advantage of this is that the heating and cooling ductwork is now in a space that would average at about 85 degrees in the summer versus 135 degrees for a vented attic.

Contact Elizabeth and Dan Guinn at [info@danguinnhomes.com](mailto:info@danguinnhomes.com) for the free report, "Top Ten Best Ideas to Reduce Utility Bills and Spend the Savings on What You Really Want!"

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*"A little bit can go a long way."*

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*From Dreams to Reality.*

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