



# How To Be ENERGY EFFICIENT And SAVE MONEY

By: Chris Woodhouse

**IF** your home is not energy efficient, you could be spending a lot more money than necessary.

By making your home more energy efficient, you will save money, add value to your home and be environmentally conscious by using fewer natural resources.

So how do you know if your house is in need of energy efficiency improvements? And how much will you save if you make your house more efficient?

## — CONDUCT AN ENERGY AUDIT —

You can conduct your own audit by going on line to [www.energyguide.com](http://www.energyguide.com) and follow the very easy walk-through or you can have a certified auditor conduct one. They will cost around \$350 and will consist of:

1. Thermal image reading. This is a camera that takes pictures of your house, both inside and out, to look for places where you have little to no insulation. It can show you where your heat or AC cooling is least effective. Thin insulation in your attic or bad windows will be identified clearly with this process.

2. House blower test. A large fan is hooked up to your front door and air is forced through your house to find where your controlled air is leaking. This will similarly show you where your heat or AC cooling is least effective.

3. Audit questionnaire. A thorough review of your home electrical usage and habits can reveal simple and effective ways to save money that you might not have realized.

## — PICK THE LOW HANGING FRUIT —

The goal is to make improvements that are easy, cost effective and add the greatest savings. The audit can identify these items. Typically, this list will consist of:

1. Add insulation strategically. For example, seal up the attic pull-down stairs. Add an attic exhaust fan or radiant barrier in your attic in order to reduce over heating in the attic area.
2. Replace aged appliances that are not ENERGY STAR-certified and energy efficient.
3. Add a programmable thermostat.

4. Replace aged and single-glass paned windows.

5. Strategically seal your house where air is leaking.

## — TAX CREDITS AVAILABLE —

As part of the 2009 Federal Government Stimulus package, major tax incentives and credits are being offered for green home improvements. Local utility companies are setting up these programs to provide incentives for everything from adding solar panels to replacing water heaters with new energy-efficient models. Go to: [www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org) or [www.energytaxincentives.org](http://www.energytaxincentives.org) and visit your local utility website for specific incentives. 🏠

*Chris Woodhouse is the founder and owner of Hands4Hire Professional Handymen, Inc. His crew of trained and background-checked technicians specialize in home repair and smaller remodeling projects from one-hour jobs to building a deck or installing a French door in your house.*