

Coldwell Banker Milestone Real Estate

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Energy Conservation Begins at Home

Let's face it: Staying warm enough this time of year (without wearing a parka inside the house) is expensive. With winter approaching, it's a good time to get your home ready for the cold temperatures ahead.

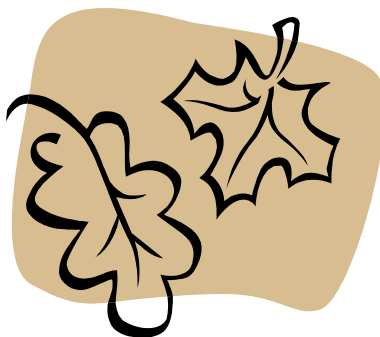
Check out these 10 strategies for lowering your heating bills, saving resources, and helping to preserve the planet.

- 1. Flip a switch.** Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- 2. Plug up the big gaps.** Seal cracks, especially around windows and doors, with caulk and weather stripping. Install storm windows.
- 3. Plug up the small gaps, too.** Put foam insulators behind the faceplates for light switches and electrical outlets.
- 4. Add a barrier.** Install or increase the amount of insulation, paying special attention to the attic and basement where the biggest gaps and cracks are lurking.
- 5. Install a programmable thermostat.** Used properly, this little gadget can save you as much as \$150 a year in energy costs. How? By scaling the temperature down when you're away and scaling it back up when you return.
- 6. Use less energy heating water.** Set your water heater temperature to no more than 120 degrees.
- 7. Invest in new technology.** Replace your refrigerator or water heater if either is more than 10 years old. Replace your heating and cooling system if it's old and inefficient. Buy energy-efficient windows and exterior doors. Over a period of years, the energy savings will help make up for the purchase prices.
- 8. Help lightbulbs last longer.** Install dimmers in the kitchen and dining room -- it adds ambience while saving energy! Use sensors outside to turn lights on only when needed.
- 9. Switch brands.** Replace standard incandescent lightbulbs with energy-efficient ones. They cost a little more, but use less energy and last a lot longer.
- 10. Remove the guesswork.** Buy Energy Star. More than 50 types of products (from lightbulbs to new houses) bear this label. It means you're buying the most energy-efficient products on the market.

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Cheryl LaPrade
Concierge Coordinator
cheryl@cbmilestone.com
concierge@cbmilestone.com



**MILESTONE
REAL ESTATE**

224 Main Street
P.O. Box 67
New London, NH 03257
Tel: 603-526-4116
Fax: 603-526-2723
www.cbmilestone.com