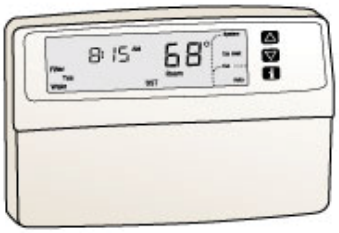
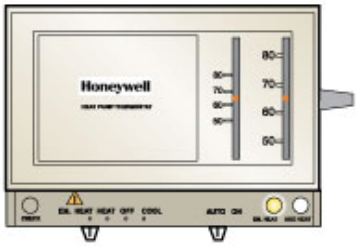
TOGETHERWESAVE EASY ENERGY TIPS

Heat Pump Thermostats





Among the most effective ways to save money on home energy costs is also one of the simplest: try to leave the thermostat alone.

Many homeowners don't understand how their heating and air conditioning systems really work. Consequently, they waste electricity by pushing the thermostat up or down every time they feel a bit cold or slightly stuffy. This is counter-productive. It wastes energy and drives up your costs.

Here are some ways to use your heating/air conditioning system more effectively.

Set the thermostat at a moderate temperature at the beginning of each season and leave it there. EPA's recommendation is that your winter time setting be around 68 degrees. Many people believe that if they turn their thermostats down 10 degrees at night during the winter, they're saving. But if you own an electric heat pump, you're doing just the opposite.

When you return your thermostat straight to its normal setting the next morning, the thermostat will not use the heat pump to heat the air. It will use the more costly auxiliary/emergency heat to recover to your normal setting.

The reason is that the much more expensive auxiliary/emergency heat will come on when your unit attempts to recover to a comfortable room temperature the next morning.

When you move the thermostat up more than 2 degrees, the system's expensive auxiliary heat will kick on.

In general, the average heat pump costs about 35 to 40 cents an hour to operate. But auxiliary heat can cost $1 or more an hour.

In the summer, this is less of an issue because no auxiliary power comes on with your heat pump's air conditioner.

Remember that pushing the thermostat drastically higher won't make it warm up more quickly. In winter, when people enter the house and it feels cold, they'll often move the thermostat higher than they really want the temperature to be, thinking that will warm up the house faster. It won't (unless you own a heat pump, which will kick on the expensive auxiliary heat). Instead, the furnace will continue running until it reaches the temperature at which the thermostat is set—85 degrees, say—which is far warmer than your house needs to be.