

# AHA DIY Home Energy Audit

Created by the American Homeowners Association (AHA)

## What Is a Home Energy Audit — and Why It Matters

A **home energy audit** is a step-by-step evaluation of how your home uses — and loses — energy. The goal is to identify where you're wasting energy (like drafty windows or poor insulation) and what you can do to improve efficiency.

Think of it like a checkup for your home. Just like a doctor spots early signs of health issues, an energy audit finds hidden problems that could be costing you money — and comfort.

### How It Helps Homeowners:

- **Lower utility bills** by fixing energy-wasting issues
- **Increase comfort** by eliminating hot or cold spots
- **Spot hidden problems** (like poor attic insulation or leaky ducts)
- **Prioritize upgrades** based on impact and cost
- **Boost resale value** with documented improvements

You can do a simple DIY audit using this checklist to catch obvious issues — or hire a certified energy pro with special tools like blower doors and thermal cameras for a deeper diagnosis. Either way, every audit is a smart step toward a more efficient, affordable home.

## DIY Audit vs. Professional Energy Audit

Both DIY and professional audits aim to reduce energy waste, but they **differ in depth, tools, and precision**.

### What a DIY Audit Can Do

Your DIY walk-through:

- Identifies **visible drafts and obvious insulation gaps**
- Helps you spot inefficient lighting or appliance use
- Provides a general sense of where losses are happening

It's excellent for *quick wins* and understanding your home's problem areas before spending money.

## What a Professional Audit Includes

A certified energy auditor goes far beyond your visual check:

### Advanced diagnostic testing

- **Blower door test:** measures airtightness and shows how much air leakage your home has — and where it's leaking.
- **Infrared/thermal imaging:** spots hidden insulation gaps and heat loss you can't feel with your hand.

### Detailed assessments

- Room-by-room inspection of insulation, ductwork, HVAC performance, moisture and combustion safety.
- Analysis of past 12-month utility bills to tailor conclusions and savings estimates.

### Comprehensive report

You get a written summary of findings with prioritized recommendations, estimated upgrade costs, and projected savings — something a DIY checklist can't provide on its own.

### Why Hire a Pro?

Consider a professional audit if:

- Your energy bills are **consistently high** even after DIY fixes.
- You have **comfort issues** (cold rooms, hot spots, inconsistent temperatures).
- You're planning **major upgrades** (insulation, new HVAC, window replacement).
- You want a **precise roadmap** with quantified savings and actionable steps.

Many utilities even offer professional energy audits at a *reduced cost or for free*, and your DIY findings can help the auditor focus on key trouble spots.

### Pro Tip

Use your DIY audit as a **first pass** to knock out obvious issues and save money quickly. Then, if your home still feels drafty or your bills are high, a *professional audit's tools and detailed recommendations* can unlock deeper improvements — especially for hidden inefficiencies that don't show up without testing.

# AHA DIY Home Energy Audit Checklist



## Address

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## What You'll Need

- Flashlight (for attic, crawlspace, and dark corners)
- Pen or pencil (to take notes)
- Clipboard (to write on the go)
- Candle or incense stick (to detect drafts)
- Optional: Tape measure, digital thermometer, outlet gaskets, weatherstripping



## Whole Home & Air Leaks

- Windows & Doors:** Feel for drafts around frames. Do they close tightly?
- Baseboards & Trim:** Any gaps or cracks where air might leak?
- Outlets & Switch Plates:** Cold air coming through? Consider foam gaskets.
- Attic Hatch:** Properly sealed with weatherstripping?
- Exterior Penetrations:** Check around pipes, vents, and cables.



## Insulation & Ventilation

- Attic Insulation:** Can you see the joists? If yes, you likely need more.
- Basement/Crawlspace:** Insulation present? Is it dry and intact?
- Ductwork:** Sealed and insulated?
- Exhaust Fans:** Working and venting outside?
- Attic Vents:** Clear and unobstructed?



## Heating & Cooling

- Thermostat:** Programmed for savings (day/night)?
- Filters:** Clean or replaced in the last 3 months?
- Vents:** Open and unblocked?

# AHA DIY Home Energy Audit Checklist - Cont'd

## Heating & Cooling Cont'd

**Furnace/Air Handler:** Quiet? No visible rust or leaks?

**Date of last service:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Lighting & Appliances

**Lighting:** Switched to LED or CFL bulbs?

**Appliances:** ENERGY STAR-rated where possible?

**Refrigerator:** Door seals tight? No excessive frost?

**Dryer:** Vent clear? Lint trap clean?

**Electronics:** Plugged into power strips or turned off when not in use?



## Water Heating & Usage

**Water Heater:** Set to 120–130°F?

**Tank:** Insulated (if allowed by manufacturer)?

**Hot Water Pipes:** Insulated in exposed areas?

**Faucets & Showerheads:** Use low-flow models?



## Utility Bill Review

Compare the last 12 months of bills. Look for spikes.

Are high months tied to heating or cooling seasons?

Any outliers or months worth investigating? \_\_\_\_\_



## When to Call a Pro

Compare a professional energy audit if:

- Your home still feels drafty or uneven in temperature after DIY fixes
- Your energy bills are unusually high year-round
- You're planning major upgrades like insulation, HVAC, or window replacement
- You want expert guidance and diagnostic testing like a blower door test or thermal imaging

Many utility companies offer rebates or free audits—check with your local provider.

## AHA DIY Home Energy Audit Checklist - Cont'd



## Additional Notes



## After Your DIY Energy Audit: What to Do Next

Once you've walked through your home with your checklist and taken notes, turn your findings into an action plan. Here's how:

### 1. Prioritize Your Fixes

Start with **low-cost, high-impact items** you can address yourself:

- Seal drafts around doors and windows with **weatherstripping or caulk**.
- Install foam gaskets behind outlets on exterior walls.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with **LEDs** to cut lighting energy use.
- Insulate hot water pipes and the water heater (if allowed by the manufacturer).

These moves often pay back quickly through lower energy bills and improved comfort.

### 2. Estimate Potential Savings

Review your utility bills before and after making changes to see what improved. Identifying high-use months helps you target the biggest savings opportunities.

### 3. Set Realistic Goals

Group your findings into:

- **DIY fixes** (caulking, weatherstripping, LED bulbs)
- **Smaller upgrades** you might handle over time (insulation, door sweeps)
- **Professional work** (duct sealing, HVAC servicing, whole-home air sealing)

Write these down and add approximate costs so you can **budget** and **sequence** projects over time.

### 4. Track What You've Done

Keep a simple log or use your checklist page to mark fixes and date them — this helps you monitor what's working and what still needs attention.