

Programmable Thermostats

By JOE SZYNKOWSKI | Green Shoot Media

If your home is equipped with an old-fashioned mechanical thermostat, it might be time to upgrade to the electronic, programmable style. A programmable thermostat can save you big bucks and keep your home more comfortable.

A programmable thermostat allows you to program different temperatures at different times of the day. You can tell your thermostat to keep the heat down while you're gone and kick on an hour before you expect to arrive home.

By allowing your furnace to work less for a portion of the day, you will save a good deal on your electricity or gas bill.

WHY UPGRADE?

The most obvious difference between an electronic and a mechanical thermostat is its interface. An electronic thermostat will feature buttons to change the temperature or set timers. On the other hand, a mechanical thermostat will most likely only display a dial. An electronic thermostat can be an inexpensive upgrade to make your home seem more modern.

The insides of the different thermostats are what really matters. A mechanical thermostat uses two pieces of metal that are joined together. Temperature is measured by these two pieces expanding and contracting. They are usually accurate within two to five degrees.

An electronic thermostat relies on digital sensors to measure temperature and alert your furnace when the temperature needs to be raised or lowered. These state-of-the-art sensors usually are accurate within one degree.



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ENERGY STAR TIPS

Using a programmable thermostat can keep your home warm without hurting your wallet. Take a look at some tips by Energy Star to get the most out of your thermostat:

- Follow your device's "savings set-points" for at least eight hours a day. A good time for this is while you are at work or sleeping.
- Find your home's comfort spot and avoid overriding the pro-

REAL ESTATE 101

Look for the Energy Star Logo

The average American household spends more than \$900 a year on heating and cooling, according to EnergyStar.gov.

Thermostats certified by Energy Star are certified by a third party to do the following:

- Accurately measure temperature;
- Quickly enter a low-power standby mode when inactive;
- Track and report heating and cooling equipment use trends to the homeowner; and
- Provide tailored functionality and service that deliver energy savings customized for the individual user.

grammed settings. Using the "hold" feature to turn up the heat uses more energy.

- Keep an eye on your batteries. Most units feature a low-battery indicator. Change the batteries each year for peace of mind.

CONTROLLING YOUR THERMOSTAT WHILE AWAY

You can control smart thermostats from an application on your smartphone. These thermostats might be perfect if you have a second home or vacation home.

You only need to download an app and be sure that your thermostat is connected to a Wi-Fi network to control the temperature from anywhere.



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HOMES WISE GLOSSARY

Rehabilitation mortgage: A mortgage loan made to cover the costs of repairing, improving, and sometimes acquiring an existing property.

Remaining term: The original number of payments due on the loan minus the number of payments that have been made.

SOURCE: Federal Trade Commission

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