

Water Heating Tips

A water heater plays a vital daily role in your home, delivering hot showers, loads of laundry and clean dishes. It's usually also the second-highest energy consumer in your home. Use these tips to make sure you're as comfortable and efficient as you can be.

Set your electric water heater thermostat to 120 degrees.

This is a good energy-efficient setting for most households.

- Most electric water heaters have two thermostats, and you'll need to adjust both. Read step-by-step instructions below.
- Natural gas water heaters have a dial thermostat with a range from "low" to "hottest." You can run hot water at the kitchen sink and check the temperature with an instant-read cooking thermometer. If it's too hot, adjust the dial and recheck again later.

Insulate accessible water pipes, especially the first 3 feet of pipes entering and leaving the water heater. Use correctly sized sleeves of pipe insulation or self-adhesive pipe-wrapping insulation tape. We don't recommend wrapping your water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket. Newer, high-efficiency water heaters are built with good interior insulation, so an extra layer of external insulation is unnecessary and may cause operational, safety or warranty problems.

Leaving town? Turn off your water heater. Turn it off at the breaker panel if you're going to be away for more than a few days. (If it's a natural gas water heater, just turn it to the "low" or "vacation" setting, but don't turn it off.) But don't do this during freezing weather, and remember to turn the water heater back on when you return home. Allow at least an hour for reheating.

Conduct regular maintenance. Check your manual for details.

If your water heater is 10 to 15 years old, consider upgrading before it leaks or fails at an inconvenient time.

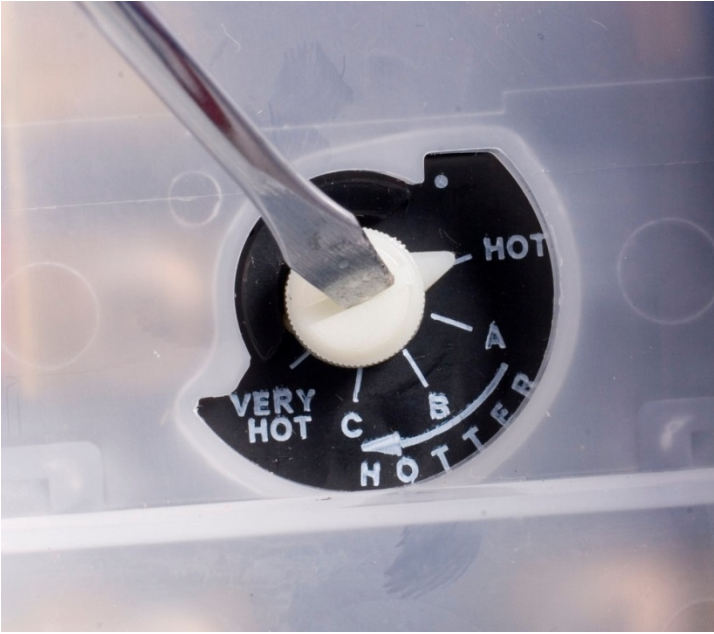
Buy the right size water heater. A 50-gallon water heater is usually big enough for up to four people. And the higher the energy factor number on a water heater, the more efficient it is.



Simple steps

- Wash laundry in cold water or at least choose warm wash/cold rinse.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Install high-efficiency showerheads and aerators.
- Fill the sink basin to shave. Don't let the water run.
- Opt for showers. A quick shower uses less hot water than a full bath.
- Scrape dishes. If you have a newer dishwasher, it should be fine to simply scrape dishes instead of rinsing them before loading the dishwasher. Give it a try. If you must rinse, use cold water.

Water Heating Tips



Lowering your electric water heater thermostat

Your electric water heater comes with thermostats — usually two — one for the upper heating element, and one for the lower. Generally, a setting above 120 F is a waste of energy. One exception: If you have a dishwasher without a booster heater, you should keep it at 140 F.

1. Turn off electricity to the heater at the breaker/fuse box.
2. Remove the covers on the water heater to expose the thermostats. You will see a lot of insulation. If necessary, move it aside until you have clear access to thermostat(s).
3. Lower both thermostats to 120 F.
4. Replace the cover plate(s) on the heater.
5. Restore electric service at the breaker panel.