

An easy way to save 15 percent on utility bills

Saving money around the house continues to be a major pursuit for homeowners nationwide. And with a focus on going green, savvy homeowners are looking for ways to cut energy use to reduce utility bills and their home's carbon footprint.

There are dozens of ways to curb energy use around the home. Sealing drafts by applying caulk and weather-stripping around windows and doors, and applying foam sealer around drafty outlets and piping leading outside can save up to 5 percent on heating costs alone. Most important, installing the proper amount of attic insulation with the proper airflow is generally the best way to save on home energy use.

If you are among the millions of Americans who enjoy do-it-yourself home improvement projects, installing a **radiant barrier** in the attic space above your home is one of the most effective energy-saving projects to consider.

While radiant barriers are not a new concept, new products on the market are making it easier for homeowners to install them and realize reductions in their energy bills each month. Overall, a radiant barrier can save an average homeowner up to 15 percent on utility bills.

The benefits of installing a radiant barrier have long been known by professionals in the construction, roofing, heating and cooling and energy industries, says Rick Jordan of EcoRite Products, a major radiant barrier manufacturer. Only recently have products been manufactured specifically for the DIY installer market.

Jordan explains that a radiant barrier is a product that is installed in the attic — between the rafters on the underside of a roof — to reduce the radiant heat gain that permeates a home when the sun is beating down on it. Radiant barrier, a particularly effective product for summer months, also reduces heat loss from a roof during the winter, reducing the workload on your furnace and lowering your heating bill.

Early, less-effective versions of radiant barriers included spray-on metallic paint, reflective chips or products known simply as “attic foil.” Installation was cumbersome, often requiring special tools, adhesives or multiple installers, and the low flash point on the older type of foil created added dangers in the event of a house fire.

It's important to choose a radiant barrier that is Energy Star-approved and made of metalized film, not perforated aluminum foil. Today's radiant



barriers are far more sophisticated, yet some are so simple to install that no tools are required.

Enerflex Radiant Barrier is an example of new radiant barrier technology. The product is available nationwide through a network of lumber and building materials dealers, as well as through major retailers. The product is Energy Star-approved and was named one of the “Best New Products of 2010” by Professional Remodeler, a leading trade magazine.

Enerflex Radiant Barrier comes in rolls or panels, pre-cut for 16-inch and 24-inch widths for installation ease. The radiant barrier panels literally flex or “snap” into place between the rafters, with no tools needed. This makes it possible for installation to be a simple, one-person, do-it-yourself job that can be completed in a matter of hours.

“Studies on installed radiant barrier products show that attic temperatures are typically reduced by a full 30 percent during the summer months, which can translate to 30 degrees on a hot summer day,” says B.J. Damstra of Universal Forest Products, one of the nation's largest building products manufacturers.

“In really hot climates, homeowners are finding additional uses for radiant barriers. In Texas and Arizona, for example, homeowners keep garages cool by installing the product on the inside of garage doors and walls. Outbuildings on farms or ranches, or outdoor workshops can also be kept cooler in the summer when the product is installed between rafters under the roof,” Damstra says.

Jordan of EcoRite Products says adding a radiant barrier in the cooler months makes installation safe and more comfortable for the installer.

Radiant barriers are a safe, proven tool for reducing energy bills and reducing the strain on a home's HVAC system. And when you can spend a few hours over a weekend and complete a project that saves money month after month, it's hard to ignore the benefits.

Visit www.EnerflexFoil.com for more information on radiant barriers or to find a retailer in your area.

