

GREEN TEAM TASK

Add Attic Insulation

Task: Add insulation to attic areas to appropriate levels. *Hint: To determine how much insulation you should have, try the Zip Code program: <http://www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html>*

Unless your home was constructed with special attention to energy efficiency, adding insulation will probably reduce your utility bills. Much of the existing housing stock in the United States was not insulated to the levels used today. Older homes are likely to use more energy than newer homes, leading to higher heating and air-conditioning bills.
(http://www.ornl.gov/sci/roofs+walls/insulation/ins_06.html)

Advanced: Improve wall or basement insulation, windows, or other problem area in your home.

If you need information on installing any type of insulation in your attic please refer to the US Department of Energy website: http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/insulation_airsealing/index.cfm/mytopic=11390

Adding Insulation to an Existing Home

Unless your home was specially constructed for energy efficiency, you can usually reduce your energy bills by adding more insulation. Many older homes have less insulation than homes built today, but adding insulation to a newer home may also pay for itself within a few years.

To determine whether you should add insulation, you first need to find out how much insulation you already have in your home and [where](#).

A qualified home energy auditor will include an insulation check as a routine part of a whole-house [energy assessment](#). An energy assessment, also known as a home energy audit, will also help identify areas of your home that are in need of [air sealing](#). (Before you insulate, you should make sure that your home is properly air sealed.)

If you don't want an energy assessment, you need to find out the following:

Where your home is, isn't, and/or should be insulated

What [type of insulation](#) you have

The [R-value](#) and the thickness or depth (inches) of the insulation you have.

If you live in a newer house, you can probably find out this information from the builder. If you live in an older house, you'll need to inspect the insulation yourself if you don't want an energy assessment.

Inspecting and Evaluating Your Insulation

Check the [attic](#), [walls](#) and floors adjacent to an unheated space, like a [garage](#) or [basement](#). The structural elements are usually exposed in these areas, which makes it easy to see what type of insulation you have and to measure its depth or thickness (inches).

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Inspect the exterior walls using an electrical outlet:

Turn off the power to the outlet.

Remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is.

Pull out a small amount of insulation if needed to help determine the type of insulation.

Check outlets on the first and upper floors, if any, and in old and new parts of a house. Just because you find insulation in one wall doesn't mean that it's everywhere in the house.

Inspect and measure the thickness (inches) of any insulation in unfinished basement ceilings and walls, or above [crawl spaces](#). If the crawl space isn't ventilated, it may have insulation in the perimeter wall. If your house is relatively new, it may have been built with insulation outside the basement or [foundation](#) walls. If so, the insulation in these spaces won't be visible. The builder or the original homeowner might be able to tell you if exterior insulation was used.

Once you've determined the type of insulation you have in these areas and its thickness (inches), see the U.S. Department of Energy's online Insulation Fact Sheet for how to [determine the R-values of insulation previously installed](#) in your home.

Additional information on adding attic insulation:

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/insulation_airsealing/index.cfm/mytopic=11390

http://www.ornl.gov/sci/roofs+walls/insulation/ins_06.html

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/insulation_airsealing/index.cfm/mytopic=11350