Message

From: Ayn-Monique Klahre [Ex. 6
Sent: 1/26/2018 12:53:51 PM
To: Jones, Enesta [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=65b8e6c6e5ca4a7a9ae85d98a4c8eedb-EJones02]; Press [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b293283291dc44e0b5d1c36be9281d8a-Press]
Subject: Re: Interview for NY Times

Hi Enesta,

Thank you VERY much for these answers and for moving things along so quickly—I know that a quick turnaround is tricky! I really appreciate your help. I will get you a publication date as soon as I have it from my editor.

All the best,
Ayn-Monique

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On Thu, Jan 25, 2018 at 7:24 PM, Jones, Enesta <Jones.Enesta@epa.gov> wrote:

> Ayn-Monique,
>
> We made a few edits. Here's the final — all **on background:**
>
> **Does every renter have control over theirown thermostat, or can that vary? (I used to live in an apartment that was in a townhouse and the heat for all three units was controlled by one thermostat in the stairwell.)**
>
> Whether a renter has full control of their thermostat can vary greatly. A smart thermostat is the easiest way to gain control over heating and cooling your home. A smart thermostat is a Wi-Fi enabled device that can automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings for optimal performance. Smart thermostats that earn the ENERGY STAR® label have been independently certified to save energy. Learn more about Smart Thermostats here..
>
> If you are a renter, always contact your landlord to see if the landlord would be willing to upgrade the thermostat or allow you to upgrade the thermostat.
>
> **What does the average renter pay for heat, and how much does that go up in the winter? Is heating always part of the electricity bill?**
>
> The typical American household spends about $2000 a year on energy bills. Upgrading to ENERGY STAR certified products will save about 30% (about $575) on your household energy bills.

If your space is truly cold, what can you reasonably ask a landlord to do? (i.e. Install a programmable thermostat, insulate the attic, weatherstrip exteriors of windows/doors, change out filters, get the heating unit every X number of months, etc). I'm guessing this varies by locale, so what's a good resource for finding out what you can ask for?

Installing a programmable thermostat/smart thermostat: See details and links above.

Sealing and Insulating: Sealing air leaks and adding insulation can improve the comfort and energy efficiency of your home or apartment. For a single family home, sealing air leaks and insulating can provide up to a 10% savings on your annual energy bills. Simple fixes include installing weather stripping on doors and caulking around windows or switch plates and outlets. Bigger jobs might include sealing leaks in the attic and basement and adding insulation in your attic and basement or crawlspace.

HVAC Maintenance:
For most rental properties, the landlord should maintain the heating and cooling system. Here are some maintenance suggestions to ask your landlord about to help ensure your rental systems are working properly:

- Checking your filter
- Have the technician tune up your HVAC system

Learn more here.

What parts of the home (windows, doors, other unexpected spots?) are most likely to let in cold air or be poorly insulated? How do you find them?

In the winter:

- Install simple to use (and easy to remove) plastic V-seal weather stripping for leaky door frames
- Install a cloth draft stop door seal (for the bottom of the door)
- Install removable window caulk over gaps and leaks that can be peeled off in the spring or when you leave
- Install removable shrink-to-fit window film over drafty windows during the winter to improve comfort.
- Cover basement window wells with plastic covers
- Close or lower any storm windows so there are two layers of glass
- If allowed, remove any window air conditioning units since they often are very drafty in the winter
- Ask for gutters to be cleaned (if they are blocked) to prevent roof damaging ice dams and water damage
- Install outlet and switch gaskets to outer walls

If you are renting a whole house, check the attic to see how much insulation is installed. Ideally, there should be at least R-30 in Southern climates (12-14 inches of cellulose or fiberglass) and R-49 in Northern Climates (16-18 inches of cellulose or fiberglass). Talk to your landlord about sealing air leaks around outer walls, windows, and doors, and to adding insulation to your rental home, especially in your attic and basement or crawlspace. Learn more at: www.energystar.gov/sealandinsulate

Since caulking is a permanent solution, what are other temporary measures a tenant could take to block cold air for getting it? For example: Would painter's tape or electrical tape work just as well as a temporary seal? Could you stuff an obvious gap with cotton balls?

There is removable (temporary) caulk available. Most tapes are hard to remove over a long winter and may pull off paint leaving damage you may have to pay for.

Is the key to simply block air flow, or insulate as well?

Sealing air leaks make an apartment more comfortable and will help the insulation in the walls work better. Both air sealing and insulation are needed for a comfortable and energy efficient home. However, as a renter, adding insulation may not be allowed without landlord permission.

What kinds of windows are the worst for losing heat? Do the insulator kits (I've used 3M's version) really work, and what kind of savings can you expect? If the key just creating another layer/barrier between the window and the room?

Single pane windows (1 layer of glass) of any style are the worst in terms of comfort and heat loss. The shrink-to-fit widow 'insulator' kits do work well. We have estimated that such kits could save about $20 per year in heating costs if installed over a single pane window in a Northern climate.

Do many people leave in-window air conditioners in place over the winter, and are those a heat-losing spot? If you can't take them out, what's the best way to seal up air conditioners? (I've seen quilted air conditioner covers online--but could do get the same effect by, say, duct-taping a towel around the unit?)

It is best to remove a window air conditioner unit, if the landlord approves, since they are often drafty and can be stored indoors to prevent ice damage. If the unit cannot be removed, many hardware stores (or on-line stores) sell snug fitting air conditioner covers to reduce the drafts. Learn more here about ENERGY STAR certified room air conditioners.

What about spots around doors, where you want to block air but still need to be able to get in and out. Anything you can do? (For example, my parents have rolled-up bath mats in front of all of their doors.)

- Install simple to use (and easy to remove) plastic V-seal weather stripping for leaky door frames
- Install a cloth or foam draft stop door seal (for the bottom of the door)

Do window coverings like thermal curtains or blinds really block cold air? Would any window covering do (like, would a blackout curtain work?) or does it have to be a certain weight/material? Could a towel hung over a tension rod work in a pinch?

Yes.

We do not recommend a towel hung over a curtain rod.

What are the recommended settings for day and night to economize on heating?

The key is to program your settings for maximum comfort and savings, with your daily schedule in mind. For example, to maximize savings without sacrificing comfort, you could program your thermostat to lower the heat by 8 degrees or more when you're away from home or asleep. This way you avoid heating your house when you don't need to, saving you about $180 a year. Learn more here.

How does that differ from where the average energy consumer sets their heat?

Most people do not keep their thermostats programmed, even if they have a programmable thermostat.

Besides saving energy, are there other benefits (environmental, wear on HVAC system) to moderating your use of heat in colder months?

By reducing energy use, these steps will also help to decrease emissions of associated pollutants. These steps can also reduce wear and tear on the HVAC equipment.

If you're in a home or apartment with rooms that can be regulated separately, is there a benefit to closing doors/using zone heating?

Yes.

Can using a space heater save you money on heating overall? What is the most efficient way to use a space heater for overall savings? How much money (if any) can you expect this to save you?

Portable and affordable, space heaters are a good way to warm small spaces. They are less efficient than most heating and cooling systems. The classic example is to keep the bathroom warm for the short time you are in there in the morning, allowing the rest of the house to be cooler.

Are there any rules about furniture arranging to help heating vents or radiators work their best? (For example, keep furniture X feet away from them?)

As long as the furniture isn't directly over the vents, you should be fine.

Are there any little things renters can do to make sure air vents or radiators are working their best? (Perhaps taking off the covers to dust inside?)

For radiators, you can bleed air out of them, or ask the landlord to do so. This will make them more efficient and effective, and in some cases, quieter!

If you have air vents, it's definitely a good idea to dust them out. If you can control how much they are open, use that to adjust which rooms are warmest.

I've read that adding humidity can make cold air feel warmer--can you verify this? What percentage humidity is ideal and how much will it raise the "real-feel" temperature? And will any humidifier do—does it matter if it's warm air versus a cold-air humidifier?

This is not likely to save energy.

Can a ceiling fan help circulate warm air to make a room feel warmer overall? Would a table fan work? Is there a temperature or fan speed tipping point where the fan goes from cooling to heating a room? Or

would that marginal use of energy offset the heating savings?

Reversing your ceiling fan in the winter will help you warm a room. In the winter, reversing the direction of the ceiling fan and operating it at a low speed will create a mild updraft. This will redistribute the rising warm air that tends to collect near the ceiling down into the living space, increasing comfort and reducing the need for mechanical space heating.

If you don't have a ceiling fan, you might be able to get a similar benefit by running a fan on low speed pointing at the warmest wall or corner in the room. If there is no warm wall or corner, a fan is not a good solution.

Can you use furnishings to further insulate the room? For example, would lining the walls with furniture help insulate a room, or inversely would grouping furniture together create warm pockets within a room? Does a rug on a floor actually keep cold at bay, or just feel warmer underfoot—or does it depend on the material it's lying on top of? If you hang a big painting on the wall, would it keep it warmer?

In general, furniture (like a couch or chair) has little impact on the insulating properties of a wall. Rugs can definitely warm up floors, especially concrete floors or floors over cold basements or crawlspaces. Having a thick carpet pad under the rug can also help.

In the living room: Do certain materials or fabric retain heat better—as in, would it be worth investing in seasonal items like a wool throw, velvet pillows, or a thicker rug because they make a real difference in how warm a room feels or how well it retains heat?

Typically, people feel cold because heat from their skin is being lost to the cold surfaces in a room. Any covering (clothing or blanket) blocking the heat loss.

In the bedroom: Same question, but is it more worth it here to invest in seasonal bedding like a heavier comforter, extra blanket or heated mattress pad for chilly nights?

See above.

Anything you can do for other rooms in the house, like the kitchen or bathroom? (Have a robe on a hook?)

If there is a cold wall, hanging thick fabric on it will help somewhat. The rug on the floor may make a colder air temperature more tolerable.