

your



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

Upgrade Your Attic Insulation



The attic may be the last place homeowners think about when considering improvement projects. However, there can be some big benefits from upgrading the insulation in your attic. Most people aren't attic experts, so here's some information on insulation upgrades for your home.

1 Determine how much you need—
The first step when upgrading attic insulation is to figure out how much new material is needed. Many believe their home has enough as is, but insulation tends to compress over time and become less effective. Get accurate measurements of your space so you're not buying too much or too little. If your attic is finished, consider adding an extra layer on top of what's currently against the roof. For unfinished attics, add layers to what's currently on the floor.

2 Understand R-values—When researching attic insulation, you will come across the term "R-value," which is the ability of a material to resist heat flow. The higher the R-value of a specific insulation, the more effective it will be for trapping heat. The Department of Energy recommends different R-value insulations depending on the area or climate where you live. Visit energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize/insulation to determine the type of insulation you'll need for your attic.

3 Big savings possible—Utility bills can be a drag on your personal finances, but attic improvements can generate savings for homeowners. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates you can save up to 15% on utility costs by adding new insulation and sealing air leaks in your attic. Also, most homes built before 1960 do not have proper insulation based on modern standards, so your older home may be losing a lot of energy. Modernizing your attic can result in a significant return on your investment.

Creating Efficient Storage Space

One of the biggest complaints from homeowners is that they don't have enough storage space. While adding extra physical rooms may not be an option for most, there are ways to creatively utilize your space.

Decluttering—Before you start thinking about reorganizing your storage space, first consider whether you absolutely need to keep everything. Decluttering may be the easiest way to open up new areas for more important items. Tackle each of your current storage spaces individually so you're not overwhelmed.

No stray items—To maximize the space you have, use boxes

or containers to efficiently make use of the area. Uniform shapes and sizes will help you determine how these containers stack—think of your storage space like a game of Tetris.

Choose the right products—Make sure to think ahead before purchasing any storage containers, racks or shelves for your closets or crawl spaces. Measure your closet and keep

these figures with you as you're shopping online or in stores.

Storage zones—Use the space you have in smart ways by keeping all items you use regularly between your knees and shoulders. Use hard-to-reach areas for items that are for long-term storage. Think vertically instead of horizontally to make your storage spaces more efficient.



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Smart Home Additions

Integrating smart home technology into your existing property is a smart move. Upgrading certain features of your home can result in increased efficiencies and cost savings down the line. Here are a few additions you can consider for your home:

Smart Lock: For those who don't like carrying around bulky sets of keys, smart locks allow for easy and quick access to your front door or any other room in your home. Many smart locks also track data that indicates when doors are opened and closed, which could be useful for families with children or helping to adjust your daily schedule.

Smart Doorbell: One of the most popular smart home devices, a smart doorbell has a built-in camera for identifying guests or solicitors. Sync your doorbell camera with your phone and you can see who's visiting even when you're out and about.

Smart Lighting: Useful in a variety of ways, consider adding smart lighting to your home. You can make your home more energy efficient by turning lights on/off remotely, and you can even set timers for turning on your lights during certain hours of the day while you're away at work or on vacation, helping to keep your property secure.

Smart Thermostat: Fine tune the temperature in your home with a smart thermostat. These devices can be set to automatically change the temperature throughout the day to make your home more comfortable and energy efficient. Many devices also have temperature-recognizing sensors that can adjust



your heating or air conditioning without your having to lift a finger.

Smart Smoke Detector: A great safety tool, a smart smoke detector can help keep you and your family safe by sending alerts to your phone if it detects a fire. They also allow you to "hush" your alarm if it's simply a burnt piece of toast—You'll never have to stand below your smoke detector waving a towel to clear smoke again!

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