

7 Ways to Keep Your Electric Baseboard Heating Bills Low

This document is intended to help you keep your energy costs as low as possible during the colder months when you will be operating your electric baseboard heaters. Please read and put into practice these tips to keep your costs LOW.

1. Keep your heaters clean.

Dust buildup on your baseboard heater will block the heat and keep it from escaping properly. This means your heater will click on, but your room will stay icy cold. Prevent this by cleaning your baseboard heaters once a month (or more if you are bit OCD like me). Cleaning them is super easy—just vacuum the heater's fins and housing.

2. Turn it down!

Practice zone heating whenever possible. What's zone heating? It's when you turn down the heat and close the doors of unused rooms. But don't turn the heat off completely! Your baseboard heater will have to work harder and use more energy to get back to a comfortable temperature once you turn it back on. I find that 55 degrees is the optimal temperature for my vacant rooms. I also like to keep my window coverings open during the day to allow the sun to naturally heat the room so it stays warmer even with the heater turned way down.

3. Calibrate

Your thermostats are brand new – however, practice a simple test just to make sure they're accurate. Just place a weather thermometer (you can find them for under \$1 at almost any store) near the heater. Check the actual temperature in the room throughout the day, and adjust your thermostat until you reach the lowest temperature you feel comfortable with. Mark that temperature on your thermostat so you will know where to set it every time you turn the heater on. In some cases, we've found that 70 degrees was actually almost 75 on a thermostat!

4. Insulate

Although we have made great efforts to seal around windows and doors, as well as insulate the property, this is a historic structure and cold air will find a way to get in. You want to eliminate any kind of window and door drafts if possible. Sealant strips are easy to apply—they're just like tape, and super cheap. You can also find window and door insulation kits for only \$8. They contain everything you need to seal your doors and windows up tight.

5. Contact American Electric Power today.

Some utility companies will give you a discount on your energy bill if an insufficient heating source (such as baseboard heaters) is your only source of heat. Discounts tend to range anywhere from 5–40% of your bill. Because some programs are income based, you'll have to check with your local utility company to see what you may qualify for. Mention you are a student, never hurts to ask.

6. Run laundry at night.

Run your washer and dryer at night instead of during the day. Why? Appliances generate heat, which means your house will rely less on your baseboard heaters to warm up your rooms.

7. Turn on your ceiling fans!

Everyone knows that heat rises. Take advantage of this natural phenomenon by turning your ceiling fan on. By reversing its direction so it spins clockwise (there should be a switch somewhere on the motor housing to change the direction of the blades), the fan will not only push the hot air down, it will help circulate warm air throughout the entire room.