As warm summer breezes give way to crisp winter chills, the amount of clothing you wear isn't the only thing increasing. With home heating costs continually rising, many are searching for simple and cheap ways to winterize and warm their homes. If you're searching for a way to keep the cold out, and the monthly heating bills at a minimum, then delve into these 10 easy and cost effective winterizing methods before Father Winter fully takes hold.

**Prep Tip #1  Plan Early and Plant Evergreens**

Planting evergreens, to create windbreaks along the northwestern border of your property blocks cold winter winds from infiltrating your home. In fact, these trees can reduce heating costs by up to 30%. Increase the natural insulation of your home by placing dense shrubs directly along the sides of your home.
Prep Tip #2  Bubble Wrap Your Windows

Attaching bubble wrap to windows traps warm air inside while blocking cold air from leeching in through the window panes. While standard plastic wrap is acceptable, the air bubbles in bubble wrap provide an extra layer of insulation if you're able to resist popping them.

Prep Tip #3  Place Draft Stoppers On All Doors

Draft stoppers can be made out of towels, sheets and even old sweaters. By placing draft stoppers along the bottom portion of each door, your home is consolidated into smaller "units," which require much less heat to keep warm.

Prep Tip #4  Set Ceiling Fans to Reverse

Reversing the circulation of ceiling fans draws warm air that's risen to the top of a room back down into living areas. You'd be surprised how much warm air is lurking on your ceiling. By simply flipping a switch, you can save up to 10% on heating costs.

Prep Tip #5  Remove Window Air Conditioning Units

While a lifesaver during humid summer months, the cracks created from window A/C units literally sucks out precious warm air and invites arctic winds into your home. As summer turns into fall, take out all window A/C units. In fact, the drafts created by window units can waste up to 30% of energy per year.

Prep Tip #6  Remove Fall Leaves From Your Gutters

While you're probably well aware of the importance of clean and free-flowing gutters, did you know that clogged gutters during winter months can significantly reduce inside ambient temperatures? Prevent ice dams and icicles from forming, which is like surrounding your windows and walls with ice cubes, by thoroughly cleaning gutters at the first sign of frost.

Prep Tip #7  Install Weatherstipping Tape on Windows and Doors

The fight between your warmth and outdoor frigid temperatures is won by eliminating drafts. Install weatherstripping tape along the frames of windows and doors before the nights turn arctic to keep cold air out and warm air in.

Prep Tip #8  Seal Off Your Chimney

Chimneys, when not in use, account for a substantial amount of heat loss during winter months.
Therefore, seal off the entrance of fireplaces by wrapping its opening in plastic wrap. If your budget allows, increase the insulation of this heat-leecher by placing a chimney balloon inside the chimney shoot.

**Prep Tip #9  Place Blankets on Bare Floors**

There's nothing quite as awful as waking up in the morning to be welcomed by frigid, hard floors. Increase the insulation of all rooms with non-carpeted floors by securing blankets, or rugs, across all living spaces. While it may not be the most beautiful addition to your interior design, it's an effective way to cheaply winterize your home.

**Prep Tip #10  Baked Potato...In My Bed?**

There are times, in the peak of winter's harsh reality, where even the most effective heat-trapping methods aren't enough to keep you warm. If you wish to refrain from increasing furnace output, simply place hot baked potatoes into tube socks, preferably wool socks, and stick them under your bed sheets for 15 to 30 minutes. Not only will your bed be toasty, but you'll have potatoes for a hashbrown breakfast!

**Prep Tip #11  Low Cost Thermal Curtains from Comforters**

Take an old comforter that's long and wide enough to cover the window and then sew in some hook and loop tape or some curtain hooks to hang your new thermal curtains. You can also sew in some hook and loop or hooks along the bottom, so you can then roll up the curtain when not in use. If you are skilled with the sewing machine, you can cut your comforter to fit the window. Otherwise just let them hang a little longer/wider like we do!

(Image from: Wikipedia)