

Daily Evening Item

# Lifestyle

Lynn, Mass., Monday, March 12, 1979 — 23

## Insulate course

When most social calendars call for settling into hibernation during these deep-freeze winter months, many homeowners are looking for ways to warm up their homes.

Here are ways to increase income by performing just one indoor task — insulate your home and you can save money through income tax credits and on lower heating bills.

If insulating sounds like a major project and certainly not women's work, there's more you should know about home insulation. First of all, if you can get shelf paper on kitchen cupboards, you're skilled enough to tackle insulating an unfinished attic, a crawl space or a wall between an unheated garage and the living area. The results will be worthwhile and the savings as real as extra income. In addition, you don't have to insulate the entire house at once. Adding to

do this, some do it better than others. As "Consumer Reports" noted, "Six inches of fiber glass insulation, for instance, is as effective as a brick wall more than eight feet thick."

But these days, six inches of insulation is considered to be only half enough for most parts of the country. The Certified Home Institute recommends at least 12 inches of fiber glass insulation in the attic floor for all but the hottest areas. Determining the thickness of insulation needed depends on the material's "R-value," which is the measure of the product's ability to retard heat flow; the higher the R-value, the better the insulation — and 12 inches of fiber glass insulation yields a comfortable R-38.

The Department of Energy has estimated that it's possible to save up to 30 percent of heating costs by adding proper amounts of insulation to a previously

insulated house. With an annual heating bill of \$500 (a conservative estimate), a homeowner under those conditions could save \$150 — and savings would increase with higher fuel costs, which OPEC has promised for the near future. Beneficial savings versus costs are also obtained although the payback period may be longer by adding recommended amounts of insulation to areas where the present levels are inadequate. Savings will vary, however, based on factors such as climate, type and size of house, living habits, and the amount of insulation in the house now.

Since your purpose in insulating is to make your home a tight, non-drafting shell, you must do a preliminary check of close chimney flue openings, weather-strip doors and windows where you can feel cold air, and possibly have storm windows and doors installed — all of which also qualify for a tax credit. Then you're ready for your do-it-yourself insulating project.

Start at the top by inspecting your attic, since most heat loss occurs through the roof. If you have less than six inches of insulation you are under-insulated even in a temperate zone because air conditioning costs can also be conserved by preventing heat gain from the outdoors.

Undisturbed areas such as attic floors and garage walls between the house and unheated garages are easiest and often least expensive to do. Besides,

insulating these areas is not like making a new dress. You don't have to finish it to reap the benefits. Even if you leave the insulating project half finished, you're still ahead from the standpoint of energy conservation.

Although there are many different forms of insulation, you would be well advised to work with flexible fiber glass insulation in the form of blankets or batts which can be purchased in widths to fit easily and snugly between joists or studs. Fiberglass insulation products are best left to the professionals, who have the tools and special equipment.

When insulating, there are several ways to make the project easy and pleasant. Wear gloves to save your hands and avoid splinters. Have someone help you with a heavy pack or other work platform to support you. Use correct tools, such as a sharp knife with sheath to cut the insulation to size, and a long-handled broom to push the insulation under eaves.

In addition, if you install a product with a vapor barrier, such as a foil surface on one side of the insulation, it must face the inside of the house to prevent moisture condensation, and can be purchased attach-



Roll out for profits

The ease of installing fiber glass blankets is evident here. Simply tear off the wrapping and lay the blanket between the joists, just roll it out and tuck it in gently.

ed to the insulation. Fiber glass batts and blankets are available with or without the barrier and come in standard thicknesses providing R-values of 11, 13, 15 and 22. If you add one batt of R-13 on top of another R-13 to reach a desired R-26, you only need the bottom vapor barrier.

As additional projects, you might want to insulate the basement ceiling, floors over crawl spaces where access is possible underneath, and garage ceilings if there's a room overhead. In these situations, insulation can be held in place with wire strung from joist to joist or push-in-place metal rods.

Insulating may not replace neodependents as a womanly art, but increasing numbers of women are installing their own insulation at more and more of their homes. And while not exactly your usual arts and crafts, it is extremely satisfying — especially when you begin to see lower heating bills and a tax credit for your efforts. For more information on home insulation, write for the free booklet, "How to Insulate for Maximum Economic Return," from the Certified Home Institute, P.O. Box 80, Valley Forge, PA 19422.

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