

Home Tips Everyone Can Use

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Window film is an inexpensive way to help lower your monthly energy bills. Several types of window films are available to suit your specific needs. Home improvement stores and on-line retailers offer insulating films for your windows and sliding glass doors.

Insulating films serve their obvious purpose of reflecting sunlight (heat) in the warmer months, which can reduce a home's solar heat gain by up to 75%. By lowering potential heat gain, insulating window films help to substantially lower your energy bill during summer months. In the cooler months, the insulating film reflects up to 35% of indoor heat back into the room. Insulating films can also help prevent your carpets, upholstery, draperies and artwork from fading over the years.

Heat shrink film is at the more basic end of the spectrum. This film is typically sold in rolls and sheets and can be cut to size to fit the dimensions of a particular window. Once attached to the window frame with double-sided tape, a hair dryer is used to shrink the film, providing a better seal around the window and removing any visible wrinkles. Since the film is clear, light still penetrates into the space. However, because it is attached to the window frame, you have to live with a closed window until you're ready to remove the film for good. And the residue from the double-sided tape can be difficult to remove from the window frame.

A better choice is Low-Emissivity (Low-E) window film, coated with a thin and nearly invisible metallic coating that helps to reduce infrared heat transfer between the interior and exterior panes of a double-paned window. Low-E window film is applied directly onto the inside of the window. Removing Low-E film is simple and cleanup is easy.

Low-E window film is slightly more expensive than heat shrink films. But both are still a fraction of the cost of replacement windows.

Window film application is an easy, weekend project. And with many styles and patterns to choose from, today's window films offer decorative options in addition to improved interior functionality.

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