

My Energy Audit, Part 2: Windows

Energy Savers Blog

Last time I wrote about the [heating portion of my energy audit](#) [1]—now for some other items that were checked.

The auditor checked some of the windows, which are [double-paned](#) [2], and showed me cracks between the window frame and the house that should be caulked. She recommended [caulking both the inside and outside](#) [3]. That's easy enough for me to do—at least the inside—so I got some clear caulking and some gadgets to ensure a smooth finish from the home improvement store (I LOVE gadgets). I'm planning to start with the downstairs windows to perfect my technique, and at one window a week, hopefully I'll be finished before the cold weather sets in. I do have a handyman friend who will be caulking the outside of the windows (I hate ladder work), so that will be taken care of in case I fall behind my schedule for caulking the inside.

One of the things that I have been considering is putting [low-emissivity film](#) [4] on at least the north and maybe the west windows—the sun never comes in the north windows in the winter (no added heat from the sun), and always shines in there in the summer (adding heat all summer, when I don't need it). The only east window doesn't get sun for long, and I can close the shades during the day on the south windows.

The auditor said instead of film on the windows, they recommend cellular (insulating) blinds that have an insulating value up to R7 or thermal [draperies](#) [5] instead. A consideration for me is that the carpet under the west windows is quite faded, which blinds wouldn't help as I wouldn't want them closed all the time—the whole point of windows is to let light in. Elizabeth's blog about [making her own draperies](#) [6] momentarily inspired me. I need new window treatments whether or not I put film on the windows. On further research, however, I've decided not to tackle making my own thermal drapes. While I did make pleated drapes years ago, they were fairly simple. Adding a thermal barrier/layer involves added work and time, which I don't have, not to mention the "lay the fabric on the floor" part of the instructions. With three long-haired dogs, I'd have to vacuum the floor first every time (part of the Law of Unintended Consequences) unless I can count the dog hair as part of the insulation. Oh well, it was a nice idea while it lasted, but I'm saving energy by not vacuuming as much, right? Back to the film plan. As a side note, I had my car windows coated for thermal control a couple years ago. By helping keep the inside of the car cooler, it reduces the need for as much air conditioning (or heating), reducing the load on the engine, thus saving gas as well.

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

Source URL (retrieved on 07/23/2014 - 5:29am):

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[1] <http://www.eereblogs.energy.gov/energysavers/post/My-Energy-Audit-Part-1-Heating.aspx>

[2] http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/windows_doors_skylights/index.cfm/mytopic=13420

[3] http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/insulation_airsealing/index.cfm/mytopic=11270

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[6] <http://www.eereblogs.energy.gov/energysavers/post/Save-Money-with-Your-Very-Own-Drapes.aspx>