

## Furnaces

Central heating is very common in single family houses, as well as townhomes or duplexes. The furnace acts as the central part of the heating system, generating heat in a single place and blowing hot air to the rest of the home through ducts. Furnaces typically use natural gas, oil, or electricity to heat air.

	Natural Gas	Oil	Electricity
Typical yearly cost	\$500-700	\$1,200-1,700	\$1,700-1,900
Life expectancy	15-30 years		
Pros	Relatively low cost for heating	Relatively low cost to install	Low heat loss, can be combined easily with A/C
Cons	Greater amounts of heat loss than electric; gas not available in all areas	More heat loss than gas or electric; requires yearly maintenance	High cost for heating, slow to create heat

For all furnaces, a few small changes can lower your heating costs:

- 1. Lower your thermostat when you are away from home or sleeping*  
Consider setting your thermostat to 68 degrees while you're at home and lowering your heat to 55 degrees when you are away or sleeping. Lowering the temperature can save you energy (and money!).
- 2. Insulate your ductwork*  
You can seal your ductwork with silver foil tape or mastic tape (not duct tape) to reduce air from leaking. Once your ducts are sealed, insulate your ductwork to prevent the heat from escaping into your basement or crawlspace.
- 3. Change your furnace filter*  
Keeping your furnace filter clean helps your furnace run more efficiently and use less energy. You should check you filter about once a month during the heating season to make sure it is changed regularly.