

furnace filters

Furnace filters clean the air of dust, dirt, pollen, pet hair and mites. Changing them occasionally will help keep your heating and cooling system last longer, keep your home's air cleaner, and allow your furnace's blower to run a tiny bit more efficiently.

However ignore all those fliers that say you have to change your furnace filters

once a month. There are no measured savings from frequent filter replacements. In the words of Michael Blasnik, the country's energy-saving Nostradamus, the idea is "hooley." The dirtier they are (up to a point) the better they work to actually clean the air, since the dirt particles are more likely to get caught in the filter.

When to change your furnace filter

If you use the standard less-expensive filter, then change them once a season. If you use the thicker pleated filters, then twice a season is probably worthwhile.

If you use your furnace and central AC, then you have to change the filter during the heating season as well as during the cooling season.

Furnace filters: how clean should they be?



See our [photos](#) showing how clean furnace filters should be and where they generally are located on the furnace.



How to change your furnace filter

- Energy savings per decade: **Up to \$357 and 2,840 lbs. CO₂**
- Level of difficulty: **Easy**
- Cost: **\$3 to \$35**
- How long it takes: **5 minutes**
- Tools & materials: **Your fingers, a flashlight, sometimes a screwdriver**

Ideally your furnace will have an instruction manual taped to its side. Look in the manual for directions showing where the filter (or filters) goes and how to change it. If there is no manual, you can always Google the furnace model to get directions.

If you can't find directions, here are some generic directions.

1. Open or slide the door panel on your furnace to get access to the furnace.

2. Normally the filter will be where the air returns to your furnace --in the duct itself or in the entrance to the blower chamber. Sometimes there is a filter in both locations.
3. If there is a cover on the filter, unscrew it.
4. Slide out the old filter.
5. Slide in the new filter with the airflow arrows pointing toward the blower.
6. Screw the cover back onto the filter if necessary. Close the furnace door(s) back up.

Note: Energy savings will vary a lot depending on what type of filter, how dusty your home is, etc.

