

## 10 Ways to Weatherize Your Historic Home by Julia Rochhi

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Do you live in an older or historic home? Could your energy bills use a little bit of help? Are you wondering how to lower them without affecting the unique features that give your house its character?

Today's 10 on Tuesday guide -- a new feature on Preservation Nation that will share preservation-friendly tips, tools, and ideas -- is all about how you can increase your home's energy performance in a way that maximizes energy savings and preserves your home's historic character.

Most of these recommendations will work for a home of almost any age or style. In fact, many traditional homes were built with locally sourced materials and environmentally-friendly features such as thick walls, light-reflecting finishes, operable windows and shutters, vents, awnings and porches to provide shade.

So if you're the owner of an older or historic home, you can feel good about living in a building that has served well for 50, 100, or 200 years or more. Here are 10 ways to keep it that way for another century:

1. Consider a whole-house approach. When you weatherize a home, you are equipping it with everything it needs to be more energy efficient. So look beyond just one area or component of the house, and take into account how the whole structure is working together.
2. Identify problem areas by conducting an energy audit. Local utilities and state energy agencies now frequently offer audits -- for free or at minimal cost -- to help homeowners target leaks and identify cost-effective options for sealing them.
3. Seal cracks, holes, and gaps, especially around windows, doors, and other areas with high potential for heat loss. Think small cracks don't matter? A gap of just 1/8 of an inch under a standard door lets in as much air as having a 2.4 inch-wide hole in the wall. And remember: For every cubic foot of heated or cooled air (that you pay to condition) that leaves your house, one cubic foot of outside air enters!
4. Reduce drafts with simple steps such as closing curtains, blinds, shades, or shutters at night in cold weather; using draft "snakes" at doors (or simply a rolled towel); and closing your fireplace damper when fireplace is not being used in winter.
5. Check for proper ventilation to spaces you aren't heating or cooling to protect from the effects of condensation.
6. Repair older windows and doors with new glazing. Install storm windows where appropriate. (More on window repairs in a future 10 on Tuesday!)
7. Make sure water is properly draining away from a building through gutters and downspouts, combined with foundation waterproofing and drains.
8. Install insulation, where appropriate, around ducts, pipes, and water heaters, as well as near the foundation and sill.
9. Maintain watertight roofing and siding.
10. Establish a baseline for your energy usage so you know a) if your changes are working, and b) if you're really saving money. One way to track your energy usage is to analyze your energy bills for the last twelve months (or longer if available).

As you can see, weatherizing your home doesn't have to cost a lot of money to be effective. You can take on plenty of low-cost DIY projects to save energy, and put those extra savings toward the fun projects (or perhaps another historic property...?).