



## Energy Savings: Attics

by [Kristine Solomon](#), Posted Aug 2nd 2010 1:00PM

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Cool off this notoriously stuffy space with helpful hints from the [U.S. Green Building Council](#).

With the sun beating down on it and heat rising, the attic can be the hottest room in the house. In fact, the temperature in the attic can climb to a stifling 150 degrees on a hot day in the summer, which can increase cooling costs by 40 percent. Sweating yet? Here are a few ways to cool things down up there.

### **1. Add Insulation**

Your attic should have R-22 insulation -- "7 inches of fiberglass or rock wool, or 6 inches of cellulose," say our friends over at [Green Home Guide](#). If it doesn't have enough, add more. The [U.S. Department of Energy's website](#) will help you know what's best in your region.

### **2. Seal Openings in the Attic's Envelope**

Insulation is important, but before you go about it, [make sure all the openings in the attic's envelope are sealed](#). That means sealing around vents, plumbing, recessed lights, and windows. Green Home Guide suggested laying down a 6-mil polyethylene vapor barrier. But make sure to take precautions against fire: Don't cover or pack insulation around electrical fixtures, bare stove pipes, or anything else that produces heat -- unless a label on the fixture indicates it's safe for direct contact with insulation.

### **3. Ventilate**

Ventilation is important in every room, but especially in the attic. [Lower attic temperatures by about 10 degrees](#) by installing [gable vents](#). Lower temps even more by installing a [ridge-and-soffit ventilation system](#).

#### **4. Re-Roof the Right Way**

If you've decided to overhaul the roof, [make sure to install white or pale-colored shingles](#) as opposed to dark ones, which attract a substantial amount of heat from the sun.

*This information is courtesy of the U.S. Green Building Council. For more tips on saving energy and greening your home, visit USGBC's [Green Home Guide](#).*