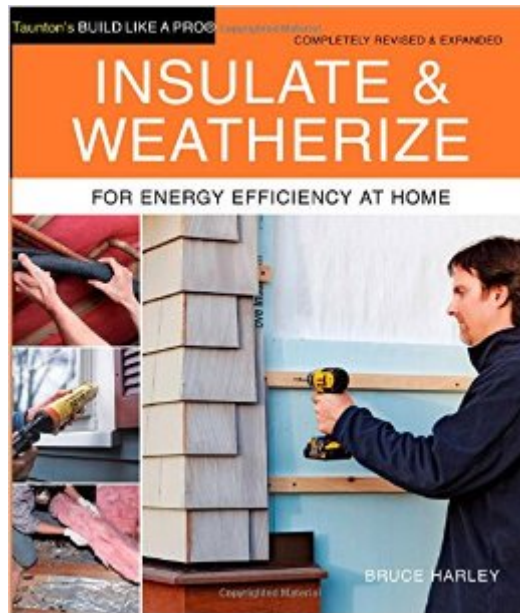


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# Insulate And Weatherize: For Energy Efficiency At Home (Taunton's Build Like A Pro)



## Synopsis

From the most basic solutions to advanced, energy-saving projects, no book covers home insulation and weatherization like this one. Homeowners will learn how best to keep their homes warm in winter, cool in summer and weather-tight all year long.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Several months ago a neighbor strongly recommended that we get an energy audit. In the state I live in, the \$300 fee is actually covered by the local utility company, and they will also rebate 50% of the cost for insulation and air-sealing (up to \$2,000). Well we did the audit, and were surprised at how expensive the quote was. Some \$2,700 for the insulation and as much for the air sealing, so after the rebate the cost to us was about \$3,500. (This is for a relatively large house, 3600sf on two floors, so about 1800sf of attic.) The report was complete with Infra Red photos of two open chases into the attic, as well as other non-sealed areas including basement rim joists (I had to look up that one), and was complete with our historical electricity and gas bills for the last year (that I provided) in addition to an estimate of the savings and time to recoup the investment. Trying to get another contractor to do an estimate was difficult (they all wanted to charge me money to come out for the inspection and testing, understandable but I already got one rebate from the utility and it isn't good for two) and they wouldn't bid on just another contractor's report. On top of that the utility will only rebate to contractors doing the work, not to the DIY'er. So after a lot of research online and offline

(the local library), I came across this book, and it was exactly what I was looking for - practical guidelines and in-depth information for the where the sealing needs to be done in order of importance, and practical tips on exactly how to get it done without a lot of headache. Not to say it is easy work - I'm spending an enormous amount of time in the attic and all day yesterday in the basement - but the results have been noticeable. You would do well to get an inspection for free (if available in your area), then look at buying this book. I paid list price to get it the same day, as I had the materials to get started that day. Some lessons I've learned along the way: Get a professional expanding foam gun, and more cans than you think you'll need. The disposable applicator cans from the hardware store simply won't work very well, and it is worth the modest amount for these items (I got both the gun and the professional cans from - for some reason the big-box centers don't carry these items). Also find a local insulation-supply house, just to do a reality-check against what you are doing. They can source a lot of items that are hard to find, such as specialty covers for non-IC rated recessed lighting (I happen to have over 30 of them poking holes into the attic, a major source of heat / a/c loss). Also tackle the big holes first. I wanted at the beginning to be methodical, but now I'm aiming for efficiency, and tackling the smaller gaps and holes later. After sealing one side of our basement (in an unfinished portion), now I notice on the opposite side in a laundry area a huge gap waiting to be filled. And the cold East Coast winter, now I realize where the high gas and electric bills were coming from. Lastly be prepared to be patient and diligent. It is dusty and dirty work, crawling around an old attic and unused basement, and it is easy to put it off. However once you start on those big gaps, and notice readily how much warmer your place is, it gives you the motivation to keep on going. I can say I'm becoming something of an expert in carving 1" extruded polystyrene into strangely-shaped and difficult-to-access gaps, around bulky ductwork and in tight corners, and then accurately pointing the expanding foam gun with a hose attached to seal it up. (This morning I had to visit the basement to see how well everything ended up - and had to smile in admiring my own work!) So get this book, collect your materials, read up and get going!

Home energy efficiency is a popular subject these days. My local library had maybe two dozen books on the subject, mostly shallow exploitation books telling you to turn lights out when you leave the room, turn your thermostat down when you go on vacation for 4 weeks, buy some CFLs, stuff fiberglass batts in your attic, and then pat yourself on the back. Oh, they also tell you about EnergyStar appliances and solar panels. There are two energy efficiency books on the market that are different and much, much better. This is one of them. The other is called "Energy Efficiency" by John Krigger and Chris Dorsi. The book being reviewed here is "Insulate & Weatherize" by Bruce

Hartley -- second edition. Hartley gets deep into energy retrofits for existing homes. He starts with a superb chapter on understanding energy basics. This chapter sets the tone for the whole book. It's thorough, accurate, and detailed enough to see actual application in an old house like mine. I finally understood the difference between radiant, convection, and conduction heat transfer. Next are chapters on Air Sealing, Ventilation, Insulation, Windows, Heating Systems, Cooling, Hot Water, Renovations of old houses, and finally the glamour stuff on electronics and solar. If you note the order of the chapters, you can tell he has his priorities straight. This book is in the Taunton's Build it Like a Pro series and is aimed at do it yourselfers. The content demonstrates this by focusing on things a skilled homeowner can do -- like air seals, blowing loose insulation into an attic, installing a vent fan. If you've done any research online, asked builders, or talked to folks at building centers you know that everybody has an opinion about products and processes. Hartley has his preferences certainly. But the real value of this book is not so much in his preferences as it is in the empowerment you get simply from understanding your house as a whole system. And that's his real message. The other book I mentioned above, the Krigger/Dorsi book, is less aimed at DIY than it is at those who will be hiring most of the work out to contractors. It's also a great book, with emphasis on understanding your house as a whole system. It begins with a chapter on forming a plan. This is a really key idea. Both books suggest that working without a plan runs the risk of unintended consequences -- moisture out of control, poor choice of priorities, build up of indoor pollutants. So my advice is get either or both of these books. Get an energy audit. Make a plan. Get to work.

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