

PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT – SHOULD YOU BUY ONE?



Looking to buy a programmable thermostat? Here in Canada, a programmable thermostat is capable of saving you considerable money over the course of the year, since temperatures can fluctuate significantly during a day, let alone between seasons.

Overall buying a programmable thermostat is a great investment; however, it's super important that they are both set up properly (e.g., by a trained HVAC professional), and also used properly by the homeowner. I have seen lots of cases where incorrect thermostat settings have actually added costs to the monthly hydro bill, as well as added wear and tear on the furnace or central air conditioning unit. To get the most bang for your buck, there are a few simple rules to follow, most of which are included in a great article from our friends at Nest via the link at the bottom of this page. Keep in mind that most of their tips will work for any programmable thermostats, not just the Nest learning thermostat. In the meantime, here are a few off the top things we have learned in our 20+ years in the trade!

TOP 3 THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR OPERATING YOUR PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT:

1. Don't use too short of intervals – it doesn't make sense to try and have your furnace or A/C firing on all cylinders to hit a desired temperature for only a short period of time. It's hard on your HVAC unit and it takes more energy to get to a set temperature than to maintain one. How short is too short? Ideally you would use 6 – 8 hour intervals, or allow for small increases or decreases where that's going to be shorter.
2. Make your home energy efficient – there's not a lot of sense to using a programmable thermostat to save money if you're home isn't well insulated with ductwork that offers optimal heating or cooling to all rooms. Also consider strategically closing vents, this is called "zoning" and can be done in the rooms themselves or sometimes with the ductwork... why heat or cool square footage that isn't used?

3. Avoid temperature extremes – as alluded to a couple of places above, having too big of a temperature difference between intervals is too hard on your HVAC and depletes the savings. A couple of good target temperatures for when you're home are 21 during the day and 18 at night during winter, and 19-21 in summer. Aim for max 3-5 degrees between intervals and estimated savings will be between 10 and 15%.

Follow those three simple tips and you'll get the most savings out of your programmable thermostat and save excess wear and tear on your unit(s). Want to read more, then check out these good ideas from our friends at Nest: <https://nest.com/support/article/How-to-maximize-energy-savings-with-your-Nest-Learning-Thermostat>