

The Energy Savers

by Richard Charles

Catch up with a retrofit

A word that you'll be hearing often is "retrofit". In case you haven't met it, it goes like this: while a house is being built you can fit it with all the insulation you like, but when the house is already built and the insulation is not good enough, you bring it up to scratch with a retrofit.

But why bother when you have a good-looking home and life's not all that bad as long as there's a thermostat to push higher as the weather grows icier? The triple retrofit answer to that is: with proper insulation your fuel bills are much lower (by 25 to 55% depending on the age of the home and the type of construction), you feel a lot better indoors without drafts and cold walls, and you are helping to save valuable energy resources instead of pouring them like water through a sieve. As a bonus, your home is more comfortable winter and summer.

If you need a retrofit, and most homes do, your choice of insulating materials will depend on how you will use them, on their R-value (resistance to heat passing through them) and how well they stand up to moisture, fire, bacteria and vermin, and also on their cost, ease of handling and, depending on the use, their rigidity or flexibility. The main types you may choose from are called batt or blanket, loose fill, rigid board and foamed-in-place.

Batt or blanket insulation contains glass fibre or mineral fibre (rock or slag) and has a woolly texture. It comes in slabs (batts) or rolls (blankets) with or without a vapour barrier, and is generally the easiest insulation to handle and apply. It fits snugly between regularly spaced joists, studs or strapping.

Because it is rolled up like a carpet, the blanket is sometimes the more awkward to install. Since batt and blanket are equally effective, your choice should depend solely on where they fit best. Mineral fibre has a slightly higher R value than glass fibre.

Loose fill consists of glass, cellulose or mineral fibres, or vermiculite, polystyrene, wood shavings or wood wool. It is sold by the bag and usually costs less than batts or blankets per unit of R value. Loose fill is especially handy for irregular spaces between joists or other odd-shaped areas. It is also a simple way to insulate a wall space if you can just pour it in. The vapour barrier must be applied separately.

Rigid board insulation may be made of polystyrene, phenolic foam or polyurethane. It offers exceptional insulation for its thickness and weight, averaging R5 (per inch thick) compared with an average of 3.5 for batt or blanket, and 3 for loose fill. Other features are its rigidity and a degree of sound-proofing.

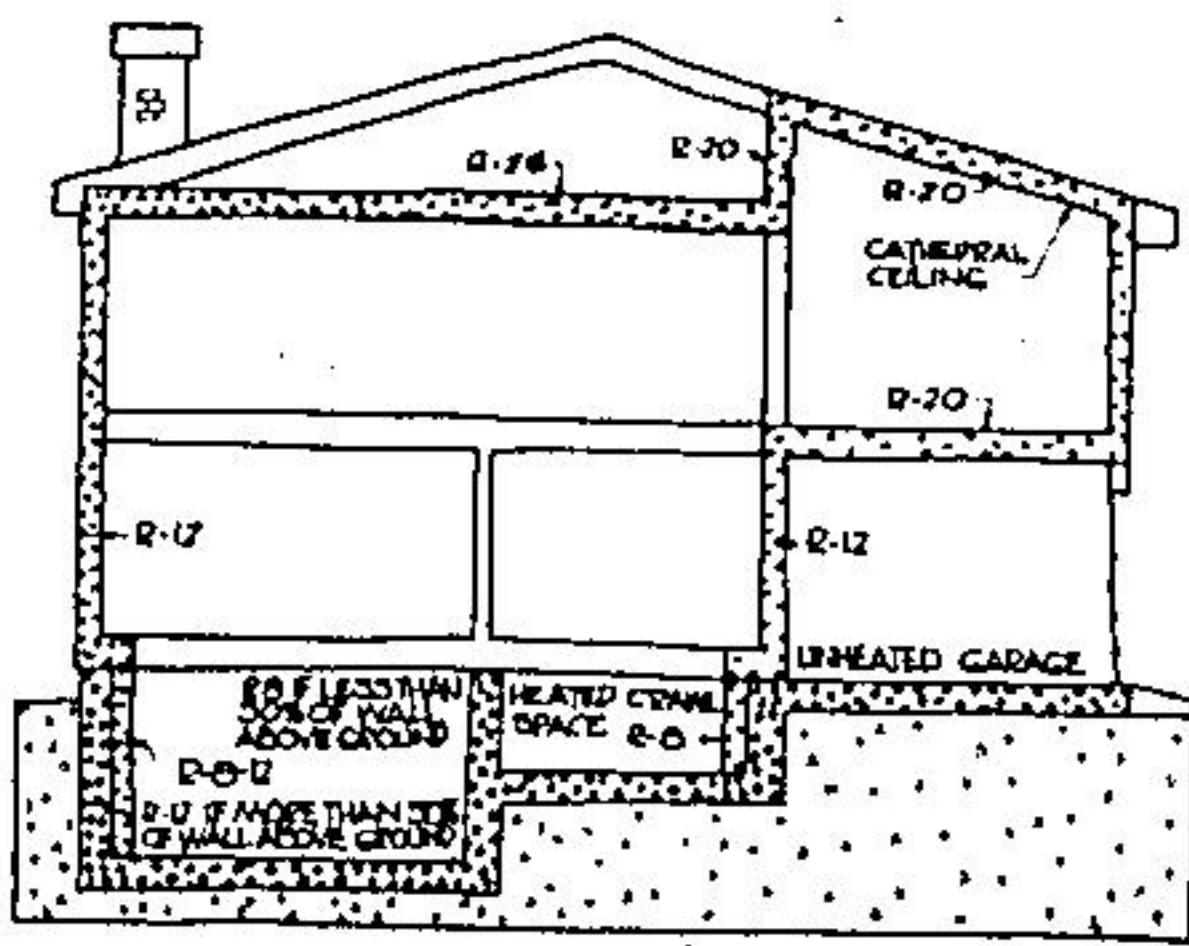
Polystyrene is usually the best buy, but it and polyurethane are flammable and need to be covered with a fire-proof material for safe use indoors. Phenolic foam is more fire-resistant. Rigid insulation can also be applied outside on walls, basements or roofs.

Foamed-in-place insulation is injected as a semi-liquid in wall cavities - a professional job needing special equipment. The material is urea-formaldehyde (average R2.5 per inch) but make sure it meets Canadian Government Specifications Board quality standards.

Where you can't insulate, you caulk or apply weatherstrips in cracks and joints, especially around doors and windows. You can find these spots by testing for drafts with a piece of plastic or tissue (hung from a coat-hanger) or by watching the drift of tobacco smoke.

You can find out a lot more about insulation from **Keeping the heat in**, a publication of the Office of Energy Conservation, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Write to Box 3500, Station C, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y4G1.

For information on government grants for re-insulation, write to: Canadian Home Insulation Program, P.O. Box 700, St. Laurent, Quebec, H4L 5A8; or phone collect (514) 341-1511.



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3 Bedroom backsplit located in Acton, featuring stone fireplace, broadloom throughout, nice setting on private lot. Asking \$50,900.

Announcing

The staff of A.E. LePage (Ont.) Ltd. are pleased to welcome Mrs. Inge Winther to their Milton office. Inge has been active in real estate and in the Milton, Acton & Campbellville countryside for the past 10 years, and is looking forward in continuing serving her friends and associates with same qualified professional service, as they have been accustomed to receiving in the past.

You may contact Inge at the A.E. LePage (Ont.) Ltd. office at 205 Main Street, 878-8101 or at her home 853-1990.

For confidential evaluation without obligation please call us.

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FAIRY LAKE AREA

This attractive split level home is located in a prime residential area and features 3 bedrooms, large bright kitchen, broadloomed living and dining area, finished rec room with bar, and its set on an attractively landscaped lot with paved drive. Asking \$59,900.



CUTE AND COZY

This 5 room brick bungalow is centrally located close to all amenities. It includes 2 bedrooms, large kitchen, sun porch, full basement and would be very economical to maintain. Asking \$40,900

HOW ABOUT THIS

An immaculate condominium overlooking quiet wooded area and featuring three finished levels including 3 bedrooms, master with 2 pc. ensuite, 1 1/2 baths, living and dining room, broadloom, family room with patio doors and laundry. Priced at \$39,500.

HOBBY FARM

Set on 10 acres with large frontage, minutes from Acton. This property includes an older 1 1/2 storey stone and cedar home, a large barn, spring pond, inground pool, and many other extras. This home has 11 rooms including 5 bedrooms, and two bathrooms and could very easily be used as a two family dwelling. It's a must to see at only \$82,500.

INCOME-INVESTMENT

Property fully rented and showing a good return. Centrally located in Acton this duplex features one, two bedroom and one, three bedrooms apartment. Large lot, good financing available, an ideal opportunity to let your money work for you. Asking \$44,500.

TRY AN OFFER, MUST BE SOLD

Set on approximately 2 acres of attractively landscaped grounds, this quality split level features 3 large bedrooms, 3 baths, ground floor family room with fireplace and walkout to large patio, custom eat-in kitchen, separate dining room, rec room, games room, ground floor laundry, double car garage, and separate storage building. Must be seen to be appreciated. Asking \$107,500.

JUST GETTING STARTED

For only \$40,400, and a low downpayment you could own this attractive townhouse featuring 3 bedrooms, living and dining room with walkout, 1 1/2 baths, and large fenced rear yard.

FOR RENT

3 bedroom townhouse with walkout from family room, four appliances included. \$350.00 per month, available November 1.



ONLY \$44,900.

The perfect starter home on an attractive lot on a quiet street. This spotless bungalow features four bedrooms, bathroom, large kitchen, den, full high and dry basement, garage and a paved drive. Try an offer.



HANDYMAN NEEDED

But at \$53,900 this property has a lot to offer including 3 bedrooms, eat-in kitchen, dining area, family room, 2 baths, air conditioning, and an inground pool. Located in Fairy Lake area, so if you're ambitious and don't mind doing a little work this is one you should see.