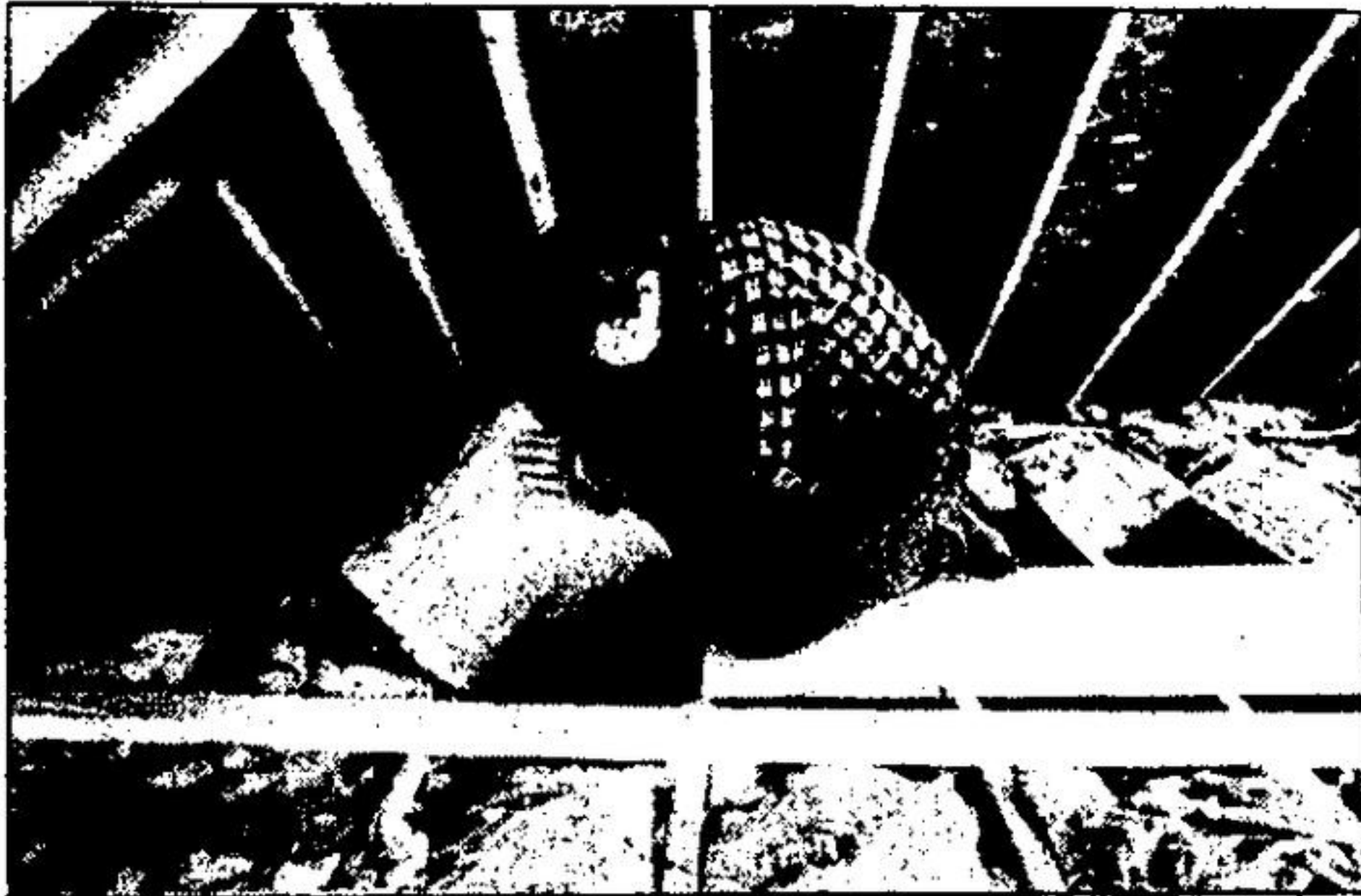


10 facts about insulating your home



ONE COMMONLY-HELD MYTH ABOUT INSULATION is that it is only effective in winter. In fact, insulation can help save on energy bills and increase comfort year-round, according to the energy experts at Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corp. "This do-it-yourselfer is conducting one of the most popular insulation projects—insulating the attic.

Homeowners who want to save money and increase the energy efficiency of their homes need the facts—not the myths—about insulation, says an industry expert.

"Installing insulation in the home is a simple and inexpensive do-it-yourself project. But to get maximum cost and comfort benefits, it is important that homeowners have a good sense of the facts before they begin," says Frank Glover of Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corp., a leading manufacturer of energy efficient building materials.

Common myths

To help homeowners complete their projects properly, Mr. Glover dispels 10 common myths about insulation.

Myth 1: "When insulating an attic, it is necessary to insulate the attic floor, walls and roof."

Fact: It is only necessary to insulate the walls and roof if you are working with a finished attic that is going to be used for living space.

If you're not planning to use the area for living space, it is only necessary to insulate the floor, which will create a thermal barrier, reducing heat loss during winter and heat gain in the summer in the living area below. Remember to install the insulation with the vapor barrier facing the warm-in-winter side.

Also, be careful not to block eave vents at the edges of the attic and be sure to keep insulation at least three inches from recessed lighting fixtures.

Myth 2: "A vapor barrier is all that's necessary to prevent condensation in the attic."

Fact: Proper ventilation is also essential to prevent condensation. Eave vents—openings at the roof overhang—combined with a ridge vent or roof vents are effective in creating a positive movement of air out of the attic.

As a general rule, one square foot of free vent area is needed for each 150 square feet of floor when no vapor barrier is used. One square foot of vent area per 300 square feet of attic floor area is recommended when a vapor barrier is used.

Helps reduce noise

Myth 8: "Insulation has very few other applications, aside from keeping a home warm in the winter and cool in the summer."

Fact: Properly installed fiber glass insulation in interior walls and ceilings can also help reduce noise in the home. The inner walls in homes are often built with plaster board or drywall on wood studs. For rooms, such as the bedroom, bathroom, family room, or in between floors, greater sound resistance may be desired.

To soundproof a wall in frame construction, place 3/4" unfaced fiber glass insulation between the studs. Hold the insulation in place with resilient channels (metal strips that break the path of vibration) available at most home centers. Directly apply drywall over the side with the resilient channels to finish the wall.

won't help much during the winter heating season. A recent government study found that under the best conditions, radiant barriers have an equivalent R-value of R-2 to R-3.5 in the winter. Other data suggests an R-5 to R-7 in the summer.

Actual performance of radiant barriers varies depending on weather, location, ventilation, dusting and other factors. Building insulation, like batts and blankets, not only provides benefit year-round but also is generally considered more cost effective.

Myth 10: "It is difficult and expensive to reinsulate my attic."

Fact: Adding a layer of R-25 Attic Blanket® insulation to a 1,000-square

foot attic costs about \$300-\$350 when you do it yourself. It is a relatively easy project and usually can be accomplished in one day.

When adding a second layer of insulation, unfaced material is recommended. Place the unfaced insulation perpendicular to the existing layer. When unfaced is unavailable, use the faced type but remove the vapor barrier or slash it freely with a knife (then install the insulation with the slashed side facing down).

If the existing layer is a few inches below the top of the joists, it is more effective to lay the batts directly on (parallel to) the insulation below.

Understanding R-values

Myth 3: "Insulation effectiveness is measured in inches."

Fact: Because different types of insulation require different thicknesses to produce the same resistance to heat flow, insulation effectiveness is not measured in inches.

Insulation effectiveness is rated by R-value—resistance to heat flow. Tiny air pockets trapped in insulating material resist the passage of heat—heat gain in the warm summer months and heat loss in colder fall and winter seasons. The higher the insulation's R-value, the greater the insulating power.

Myth 4: "Insulation is only needed in the attic."

Fact: While insulating an unfinished or unfloored attic is certainly one of the most important do-it-yourself insulation projects, four other areas of the home should be insulated to maximize energy efficiency: These are basement walls, floors above unheated crawl spaces, masonry walls in heated crawl spaces and walls between heated and unheated areas (such as a garage wall or uninsulated exterior walls).

"You have to remember," Mr. Glover adds, "that the attic is only one energy escape route out of your house. There are many others."

Myth 5: "Insulation is only effective in winter."

Fact: Traditionally, insulation was considered primarily a cold climate product, effective in helping to reduce heating bills. But insulation can be just as effective in reducing air conditioning costs during the hot summer.

The main concern is heat: Whenever there is a temperature difference between outside and inside, there will be heat flow. Insulation helps keep summer heat from entering the home, which helps the inside stay cool and lessen the need for air conditioning. Conversely, insulation keeps the house warm in winter by reducing the escape of interior heat.

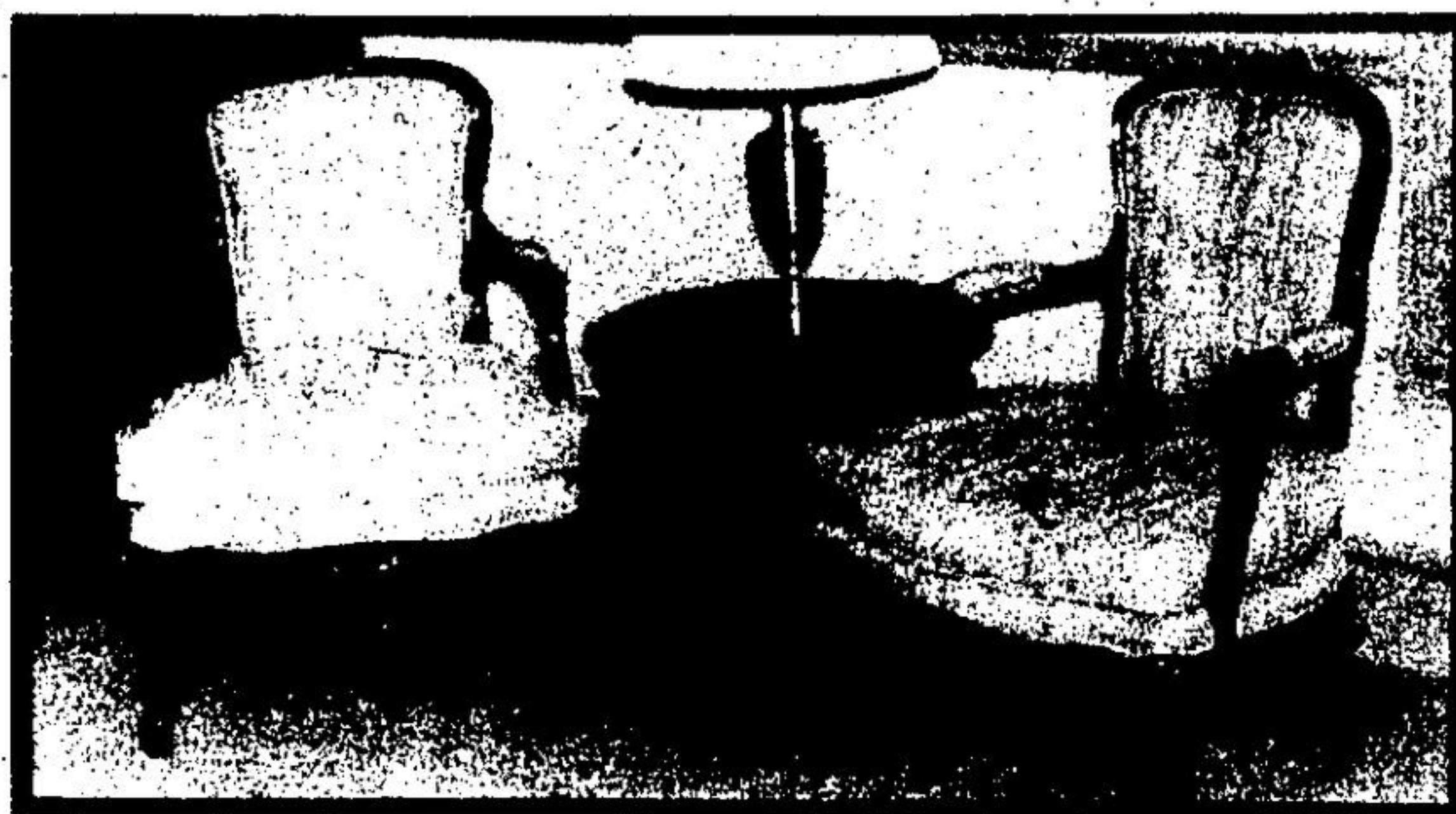
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