



Save
up to
\$500

25 Boost fireplace efficiency

so that your furnace doesn't have to work as hard. A radiant grate lifts logs off the floor, allowing air to circulate around them for a better burn. A hearth reflector sits in the back of the fireplace and directs heat into the room rather than the masonry.

COST: From \$95 for the grate and \$139 for a steel reflector at gratewalloffire.com.

SAVINGS: About **\$240** a year in reduced heating fuel bills.

BONUS: Toastier fires to cozy up to.

26 Create your own security system

with battery-powered window and door alarms, and motion-detector exterior spotlights. DIY systems like the GE Control Center Starter Kit and

Maxsa's LED Motion-Detecting lights are battery powered, so no need for new wiring.

COST: \$30 for the basic GE setup at homedepot.com, plus \$52 for two lights at homesecuritystore.com.

SAVINGS: **\$278** in the first year alone, including the cost of the equipment. Security monitoring services often install systems for free or at low cost, then charge a monthly monitoring fee of about \$30.

BONUS: No more embarrassing mea culpa phone calls to the security company when you accidentally set off your own alarm.

27 Reface appliances

rather than replace them. For the fridge, use a custom stainless-steel or acrylic frame-and-panel kit.

Updating the look of a dishwasher or trash compactor can be as simple as flipping over its existing center panel. Many older models have reversible panels with white on one side and black or beige on the other.

29 Steam-clean dingy tiles.

High-pressure steam removes grime and mildew from ceramic tile and grout lines. Rent a heavy-duty steamer and use it on any tile surface in the house, including floors, showers, and counters.

COST: \$60 for a one-day rental.

SAVINGS: **\$872** over the cost of hiring a professional to retile an 8-by-10-foot bathroom floor.

BONUS: Some steamers have attachments for cleaning drapes and furniture, too.

30 Replace aging washing-machine hoses

with heavy-duty ones from Floodchek with a 20-year warranty. Burst water lines are one of the most common causes of home water damage.

COST: \$43 for a pair of hoses at safehomeproducts.com.

SAVINGS: **\$500** just for the insurance deductible on \$5,308, the average cost of home flood remediation.

BONUS: With the washer pulled out, you can finally clean underneath it. ■