Click to verify

As a home inspector, I have seen many poorly maintained HVAC systems, and not changing the furnace filter frequently is usually the biggest culprit.Even though furnace filters are pretty cheap, if a homeowner neglects to change a furnace filter regularly, it won't catch dust and debris, and it may even go around the cardboard frame. Once dust starts going into your HVAC system, it can damage the equipment, and it will run far less efficiently.Air QualityAnd in addition to damaging your equipment, your home's air quality will suffer. Occupants may start sneezing and getting allergic symptoms due to the excess dust in the indoor air.Changing a furnace filter is usually a pretty simple process, but sometimes it can get a bit tricky. Below are my five steps on changing your furnace air filter...Read Also: What Are The Top Rated Furnace Filters For Mold?The first step that you need to do is actually locate the HVAC filter which is somewhere along the return duct.I would immediately check the furnace itself to see if the filter is there. There will likely be a slot or cover that is over the filter (to seal the air flow) and this filter cover may be a few inches wide.If you don't see it at the air conditioner, then the filter may be behind a return air vent. The return air vents suck in air from the home in order to 'return' it back to the furnace. These return air vents are much larger than the smaller supply air vents that are in the floor or ceiling.If you still can't find it, then I would go back to the furnace, and take off the HVAC cover. Sometimes the filter is located within the furnace compartment and you will have to take off the cover to change the furnace filter.Most furnace covers are pretty easy to remove. You will either have to remove a few screws, or there may be a latch that needs to be undone.Read Also: Does Furnace Filter Thickness Matter?Step 2. Choose The Right Air FilterAssuming you haven't already purchased a new filter, it is important to choose the right size filter, as well as the indoor air quality rated in MERVs.Physical SizeMost standard air conditioner filters are 1-inch thick, but 2-inch thickness is also common. Homeowners should write down the height and length dimensions (as well as the thickness).You may also have a 'media' filter which is a higher efficiency type that is usually four to five inches thick. These filters can last 6-12 months as compared to the standard 1-inch thick filters that last 1-3 months.In addition the the physical dimensions, homeowners will also have to pick the indoor air quality that they want.Read Also: What Are The Best Furnace Filters For Dust Control?MERV RatingThe industry standard rating of furnace filters is known as the MERV rating, and it stands for minimum efficiency reporting value.In essence, this rating will tell you how much particles the new filter can remove from the indoor air in a 'worst case scenario'. The MERV rating is always calculated by choosing the lowest performing test and not the highest, hence the term 'minimum efficiency'.For most homes, I would recommend a MERV rating anywhere from 7 to 12. MERV ratings 13 and higher can capture ultra fine particles including viruses.Anything above 10-11, I would consider a high MERV rating.Homeowners should also be careful about buying too high of a MERV rating because it can hinder air flow and may even damage your HVAC system. If you have any doubts, I recommend looking at the HVAC literature for your specific system to see what is the maximum filter MERV that you can go.Step 3. Turn Off The HVAC SystemBefore you change the furnace filter, it may be a good idea to turn off the HVAC system. It isn't totally necessary (I don't always do it) but it is a good practice.At minimum, if the air conditioner turns on when you change the air filter, then any loose debris is going to get sucked into the system. Plus, you may have trouble removing or installing it when the air blowing, and it may even cause a deformation of the filter.To turn of the HVAC unit, you can simply turn it off at the thermostat. However, most home pros simply flip the emergency shut-off switch at the furnace (all furnaces should have them) which is usually a red box mounted on the wall. If you have a heat pump, there should be a single breaker located on the heat pump that you can flip off.Read Also: What's The Difference Between MERV And MPR Filter Ratings?Step 4. Install The HVAC FilterAfter you have found the filter, chosen the right size and MERV, it is time to actually install it.Filter ArrowThere really isn't much to it, but probably the most important consideration is the filter arrow. Every HVAC filter is designed to only be installed in one way, and there is a small arrow on the cardboard edge of the filter. The arrow always be points in the direction of the system air flow.If you are having trouble determining the direction of air flow, the easy way is to look at where the 'guts' of the furnace or A/C is located. The air filter is always installed before the evaporator coil, blower fan, motor and other HVAC unit components.The HVAC filter is installed prior to the furnace components so it can catch the dust and debris before it damages the equipment. So all you have to do is install the filter with the arrow facing towards the furnace or HVAC components. The other side of the filter should just be the HVAC duct (with no equipment).And after you have inserted it, don't forget to reinstall the HVAC cover or the filter cover.Read Also: What Are The Top Rated HVAC Filters For Odors?Tight FitHomeowners should also verify that the filter is a tight squeeze. You don't want air to go around it, possibly damaging the equipment.A little deformation of the HVAC filter isn't a big deal, but large amounts of air should not be going around it. There are also magnetic filter covers that you can buy to give the HVAC filter an even better seal.Step 5: Turn On The HVACAfter you have installed the filter, don't forget to flip the heat pump breaker, furnace emergency switch, or turn on the thermostat.And once you have turned on the HVAC, you may want to remove the cover just to take a quick peek, and that the filter is properly sealed (and not deformed).Read Also: What Happens If My Furnace Filter Is Backwards?Final Thoughts On Changing HVAC Air FiltersChanging a furnace filter shouldn't be a difficult step, it really should just take a few minutes. However, if you have to change multiple filters at the return vents, or if you have to remove your HVAC cover just to get to the filter, it may take several minutes longer.It is important to regularly change your A/C filter to protect the equipment, and it will also give much cleaner air throughout your home.Cleaner home air will reduce allergies, and it can also reduce the need to clean the home of dust.Page 2Do you want to find the best 16x25x1 furnace filter?Probably most important step is to choose a 16x25x1 filter with the right MERV rating for your HVAC system.In this product review, I will go over...Choosing the right MERVFilter frame strengthMore pleats = more filtering abilityThe wire mesh gives filter strengthLet's get started with this guide!ImageProduct Top PickTop Pick1. Filtrete Allergen Defense16x25x13-in-1 TechMERV 1116x25x13-in-1 TechMERV 11View on Amazon 2. Aerostar Clean16x25x1Made in USAPleated16x25x1Made in USAPleatedView on Amazon 3. AIRX Allergy16x25x1Strong FrameMade in USA16x25x1Strong FrameMade in USAView on Amazon 4. Filtrete Clean Living16x25x1MERV 5More Air Flow16x25x1MERV 5More Air FlowView on Amazon 5. FilterBuy Silver16x25x1MERV 8Strong Frame16x25x1MERV 8Strong FrameView on Amazon Size at 16x25x13-in1 technology by 3MCapture fine airborne particles like lint, dust, dander, and moreMERV 11 filter ratingMetal grid for a strong frameElectrostatically chargedMy overall top pick for the best 16x25x1 furnace filter goes to the Filtrete Allergen Defense made by 3M. The Allergen Defense line of filters is rated at MERV 11 to capture some of the finest airborne particles but still allowing strong airflow. With 3M's 3-in-1 filter technology, it will allow in maximum amount of air while still capturing the majority of particulates. The 16x25x1 filter is probably the most common furnace filter size in America.This particular size for furnace filters can come in a wide variety of materials, but the most common will be fiberglass, cotton, and synthetic fibers. Here are a few tips on picking the best 16x25x1 filter...1. The MERV RatingThe industry standard for furnace filter ratings is the MERV system.MERV stands for minimum efficiency reporting value and it is a measurement of how much particles the filter can remove from the air. In essence, when a filter has a higher MERV rating, it can trap small particles to a greater extent. Most HVAC systems will have furnace filters with a MERV rating from 5-11.Anything in the 11-13 range can capture ultra fine particles like mold spores. For example, a MERV 13 filter will capture 90% or greater of particles in the 3-10 micron size.I don't recommend that homeowners get a filter above MERV 13 because it may damage your HVAC system due to the restricted air flow. And even in the 11-13 MERV range, I would still make sure with my HVAC manufacturer that my system can handle it.Read Also: How To Change Air Filters? (5 Step Guide)Pleats are the ridges in the furnace filter material. The 'accordion' shape of the furnace filter increases its surface area so it can capture more airborne particulates.Basically, the greater the number of filter pleats, the better the filter will work because of the larger surface area.And if you have two filters with the same MERV rating, but one filter is more highly pleated, this means that the greater pleated filter will have a lower airflow resistance.Basically, you can get more air flow with more pleats, but still capture the same amount of particles as a comparable filter with less pleats.3. Frame StrengthIf the frame (or wire mesh) isn't strong, eventually the filter may bend and warp inside the filter slot, which can allow air to go around the filter.Not all furnace filter frames are equal, and manufacturers can use wide variety of materials and manufacturing methods.Pretty much all 16x25x1 furnace filters will have cardboard frames. But these glued frames can still be quite strong if made with a good material. The best furnace filters are made with double walled beverage board which is a very strong cardboard.Read Also: What Are The Best Furnace Filters For Mold?The crosswire support of a furnace filter is the part that goes over the actual filter material in the center. Quite often it is a wire mesh, or a combination of wire mesh with a cardboard grid. Some filters glue plastic strips to the filter.Basically, all of these materials help give the inner portion of the filter strength, and help it from warping and bending as the air hits it.The best material in my opinion is the metal wire mesh. This is where a thin metal wire mesh wraps the filter media and gives it rigidity. All other cheaper methods just aren't as as strong as the metal mesh.Read Also: Does Furnace Filter Thickness Matter?Here are my full reviews of the top rated 16x25x1 furnace filters with their pros and cons. Check them out below... Pick #1. Filtrete Allergen Defense The Allergen Defense is a premium furnace filter by Filtrete, and it is sized at 16x25x1.These furnace filters are rated at MERV 11 and are able to capture some of the finest particles such as smoke, pet dander, dust, smog, and lint.These Filtrete filters use 3M's patented 3-in-1 technology which allows in more air flow while capturing more particles.3M recommends changing these furnace filters at least once every 30 days. Sized at 16x25x13-in-1 technology by 3MCapture dust, lint, pet dander Pick #2. Aerostar Clean The Clean series are quality furnace filters made by Aerostar that are sized in 16x25x1.These filters will capture pet dander, dust, lint, and other particulates in the air. It uses an electrostatically charged synthetic filter media in it's filters with a cardboard frame.Changing these filters out at least every 90 day is recommended. All filters made by Aerostar are manufactured in the USA. Sized at 16x25x1Electrostatically charged synthetic mediaPleatedMade in the USA Not that many pleatsComplaints of being undersized Pick #3. AIRX Allergy The Allergy series is a premium furnace filter made by AirX. These furnace filters are sized 16x25x1 which is one of the most common filter sizes.The Allergy filters by AirX can capture ultra fine particles from 1-10 microns in size like pet dander, dust, lint, and other particulates.Unlike other furnace filters, AirX uses double-walled beverage board for its framing for increased strength and moisture resistance. All filters by AirX are made in the USA. Sized at 16x25x1Captures fine particles from 1-10 micronsUses double-walled beverage board Complaints of being undersized Pick #4. Filtrete Clean Living The Clean Living series by Filtrete are top rated furnace filters that come sized at 16x25x1. These furnace filters are rated at MERV 5 which can still capture fine particles but it will not restrict air flow like higher MERVs.This means that if you want more air flow through your HVAC system, but still want good dust control, these are the filters for you.They also include 3M's patented 3-in-1 filter technology and are electrostatically charged. Sized at 16x25x1MERV 5 filter rating3-in-1 filter tech by 3M No metal wire mesh (reduced strength) Pick #5. FilterBuy Silver The Silver series of furnace filters are made by FilterBuy and manufactured 100% in the USA. These furnace filters measure in at 16x25x1 and are rated at MERV 8.With this 'mid level' MERV rating, it an still capture much of the pollen, pet dander, dust, and other particles but still allow substantial air flow. These furnace filters are manufactured in Alabama and are shipped directly from the factory.They use beverage board for their frames for a durable and strong filter. The Silver FilterBuy filters can capture up to 90% of airborne particles. Sized at 16x25x1MERV 8 filter ratingUses strong beverage board Shipping problems such as filters being glued together My overall top rated pick for the best 16x25x1 furnace filter goes to the Filtrete Allergen Defense by 3M. Here's why...#1. MERV 11This furnace filter is rated at MERV 11 so it can capture some of the finest particles such as dust, lint, pet dander, dust mites, and mold particles.#2. Strong FrameThese Filtrete filters have a very sturdy frame and include a metal wire grid that holds the filter material in place. This metal mesh will help prevent buckling of the filter.#3. 3-in-1 Technology3M includes its patented 3-in-1 filter tech with the Allergen Defense filters which helps maximize air flow but at the same time capturing some of the smallest particles.Page 3 It begins with a perplexing feeling: how do I choose the best 16x25x4 filter for my HVAC system?Even though 16x25x4 filters may all appear to be the same (after all, they are all 4-inches thick) — appearances can be deceiving.The best 16x25x4 filters maximize the number of particulates they capture but also maximize the clean airflow going through the HVAC system.Top furnace air filters will also have a strong frame, quality filter material, and the correct MERV rating. In this guide, you will learn:Our overall top pick for the best 16x25x4 HVAC filterTips on choosing the correct 16x25x4 air filters for furnacesWhy you should verify that the MERV rating is compatible (and won't harm your system)Factoring the filter undercut before you buy (all manufacturers undercut their filters)Check out my shortlist of the best filters below, but keep reading to learn more about choosing a top 16x25x4 furnace filter and our full reviews.ImageProduct Top PickTop Pick1. Filtrete Allergen Defense16x25x4 pleated filter3-in-1 patented technology3M is renowned manufacturer16x25x4 pleated filter3-in-1 patented technology3M is renowned manufacturerView on Amazon 2. Nordic Pure16x25x4 filter with heavy duty frameRated at a high MERV 12Made in the USA16x25x4 filter with heavy duty frameRated at a high MERV 12Made in the USAView on Amazon Best BudgetBest Budget3. Aerostar16x25x4 with synthetic mediaBudget-friendly 6-packRated at MERV 1116x25x4 with synthetic mediaBudget-friendly 6-packRated at MERV 11View on Amazon High MERVHigh MERV4. Filtrete Allergen Bacteria & Virus16x25x4 filterRenowned 3M companyUses 3-in-1 filter technology16x25x4 filterRenowned 3M companyUses 3-in-1 filter technologyView on Amazon Our Overall #1 Rated Pick 16x25x4 furnace filter (lasts for 12-months before changing)Uses patented 3-in-1 technology for more airflow yet more filtrationRenowned manufacturer 3MComes in a 2-pack or 4-packOur overall top pick for 16x25x4 furnace filters goes to 3M's Filtrete Allergen Defense. 3M is a renowned filter manufacturer and makes some of the best products in the world. These filters use 3M's patented 3-in-1 technology that increases the filtration but allows more airflow simultaneously. This 16x25x4 air filter brand comes in a 2-pack or 4-pack. Don't have much time? Check out our top 4 best 16x24x4 furnace filters! Keep reading to understand the details of our picks and frequently asked questions.16x25x4 inch furnace filters are specially designed for HVAC systems that can hold 4-inch thick furnace air filters and 16-inches by 25-inches for the length and width.These super-thick air filters for furnaces are also known as media filters in the HVAC industry and are some of the highest quality HVAC filters on the market. Typically, these 4-inch thick air filters brands have a MERV rating from 8 and up to 13.Even though 16x25x4 furnace filters tend to be more expensive (such as $20 to $40 per filter) — they last significantly longer and just work better.Read Also >> How To Clean Washable Furnace And A/C Air FiltersHow Do 16x25x4 Home Furnace Filters Work?16x25x4 inch HVAC filters work similarly to regular air filters except that they have 3+ times more surface area and larger pleats.This means that the 16x25x4 filter will last significantly longer than a standard air filter for the home HVAC such as a 1-inch thick filter.Since there is so much more filter material, it can capture much more particles than 1-inch filters will, but still allow strong airflow.Most 16x25x4 furnace air filters only need to be replaced every 3-6 months, but some filters such as the 3M Filtrete furnace filters can last up to 12-months.There are a few key differences you will find among the different 16x25x4 furnace filter brands.One of the biggest variations will be the filter strength. Some filter manufacturers add a wire mesh for strength and rigidity, and most companies have at least a paper grid pattern on the front. Once installed inside the furnace, these grid and mesh patterns help prevent the filter from buckling or folding.You also find 16x25x4 filters that have a different filter materials with various percentages of polyester, cotton, and other synthetic or natural fibers. There are even furnace filters that are coated with activated carbon that helps capture smelly odors from cooking or pets.How To Pick The Best 16x25x4 Air Filter For The Furnace?Choosing the best 16x25x4 involves a few factors such as the MERV rating, frame strength, filter materials, company reputation, and pricing. Here are a few buying tips:1. Frame StrengthThe quality of the frame is always a big factor when choosing an air filter brand.Even though 4-inch media filters usually have stronger frames than standard 1-inch filters, it is still a good thing to factor in when buying.16x25x4 furnace filters will have a variety of filter frame strength and a grid over the front. The front grid usually has a diamond-shaped pattern or has a type of metal mesh.Air filters for furnaces with a metal screen or mesh over the front and back are always stronger than just diamond-shaped grids. There are also 16x25x4 filters even have rubber gaskets or outer frames for additional strength and to prevent air leakage.Read Also >> Can You Run Your HVAC System Without A Filter For A Short Period?2. The Undercut16x25x4 filter manufacturers all will undercut the HVAC filter dimensions anywhere from 1/16-inch and as high as 1/2-inch.If you want to make sure that your filter is properly snug, you may want to consider the undercut dimensions provided by the manufacturer since they all tend to somewhat vary.Another option is to install some type of gasket on the perimeter of the filter slot. You can read more details on how to properly change your air filter here.The MERV rating is a measurement of how well the HVAC filter captures particles in the 0.3 to 10-micron range—MERV is an acronym that stands for Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value as mentioned by the EPA. I invite you to also read my complete guide on MERV Vs. MPR filter ratings here.Probably the average MERV rating for media filters are in the MERV 8-11 range, but the MERV can go as high as MERV 13.Also, most air filter brands (4 to 5 inches thick) tend to have a higher MERV rating than your average 1-2 inch thick filter. Since there is so much more surface area, it is more common to have a higher MERV rating with media filters because it is less hazardous to your HVAC system. Since it is so thick, it is less likely to get fully clogged and therefor damage your furnace.Even though 4-inch thick filters are more resilient, you still should verify with your HVAC literature that your system can handle that particular MERV rating.If your HVAC system can't handle the high MERV rating, at minimum it will make the system work harder but may damage your blower motor, or even burn out the entire HVAC system.Our Reviews of the Best 16x25x4 Furnace Filters Pick #1: Filtrete Allergen DefenseOur overall top pick for 16x25x4 filters goes to Filtrete Allergen Defense. Made by renowned 3M, Filtrete furnace filters are very high-quality and includes a patented technology called 3-in-1.This patented furnace air filter tech is designed to capture more microscopic particles than it's competitors but at the same time allows the clean air to pass through unobstructed. These 16x25x4 pleated furnace filters for allergies need to only be changed once every 12-months.These Filtrete furnace filters are rated at MERV 11 and work so good that they can turn your HVAC system into a whole house air purifier. Use these thick pleated 4-inch filters to capture large allergens like pet dander, mold spores but also micro-particles like smoke and smog. 16x25x4 thick pleated filter (12 month changing frequency)Uses patented 3-in-1 technology to capture more particles (and lets in more airflow)3M is a renowned and quality manufacturer Somewhat more expensive that competitor filtersSome users experience fitting issues (may not be correct dimensions for your furnace) Pick #2: Nordic PureNordic Pure is one of the leading filter manufacturers in North America, and they were the first company to introduce a pleated carbon filter to America.This 2-pack of 16x25x4 inch filters do a great job of filtering allergens, dust, pollen, and other particulates from your home—turning the HVAC system into an air purifier. Rated at MERV 12, these 4-inch pleated filters are recommended to be changed every 6-months. These 16x25-4 inch filters are proudly made in the USA, and Nordic Pure is based in Texas.They are electrostatic, anti-microbial, and made with heavy duty beverage board frames. Nordic Pure also makes a line of eco-friendly and recycled air filters for furnaces. 16x25x4 pleated filters with heavy duty beverage board framesRated at MERV 12 for a high level of filtrationMade in the USA, quality North American manufacturer Needs to be changed more often than Filtrete Pick #3: AerostarAerostar makes a fantastic budget-friendly 6-pack of 16x25x4 inch filters for your home HVAC system.These furnace filters are pleated and includes a diamond-shaped cardboard grid on the top for rigidity and strength.This 6-pack filter package is rated at MERV 11 and designed to capture pollen, mold spores, dust, dander, smoke, smog, and other fine particulates. Aerostar recommends changing these filters every 3-6 months, and at their price point, it is a good deal.These air filters for the home HVAC are manufactured in the USA by Filtration Group and are made with synthetic and electrostatic filter material. 16x25-4 inch filter with electrostatic and synthetic filter mediBudget-friendly pricingRated at MERV 11Comes in a 6-pack Needs to be changed every 3-6 months Pick #4: Filtrete Allergen Bacteria & VirusAllergen Bacteria & Virus is another excellent line of Filtrete furnace filters for allergies that we recommend for homeowners.If you want the next level of filtration capacity, these MERV 12 rated filters are for you.They are designed to capture 54% more microscopic particles such as pet dander, pollen, viruses, bacteria, and smoke. When you buy high MERV filters though, please make sure that your HVAC system can handle it (consult the manufacturer manual).3M is renowned furnace air filter manufacturer, and they use their patented 3-in-1 technology with their Filtrete furnace filters. 3-in-1 technology allows more airflow through the system and at the same time captures more particulates that competing filters. 16x25x4 pleated filter with 3-in-1 technologyRenowned 3M manufacturing qualityChange only every 12-months (lasts longer than competing filters) More expensive than the competition We chose the 3M Allergen Defense 16x25x4 filter as our top pick for these reasons:1. Quality Company3M is renowned as a global manufacturer and their furnace filters are at the top of the pack. With other filter companies, you aren't always sure what you are getting even with their advertised MERV ratings. You may be spending a little more with Filtrete filters, but you can be assured of the quality.2. 3-in-1 TechnologyThe patented 3-in-1 technology by 3M is an air filter design that increases the filtration capacity but at the same time allows more airflow through the filter. And that's what you want filters to do—allow as much airflow as possible while filtering out bad particles. This filter is rated at MERV 11.3. Infrequent Filter ChangesSince this is a 4-inch pleated furnace filter, 3M recommends only changing the filter every 12-months. And admittedly, 12-months may be a bit unrealistic, and you may need to change it more often than that. But still, these Filtrete 4-inch pleated filters last significantly longer than the competition. Maintaining a healthy and efficient heating system in your home is crucial — especially when the outdoor temperature drops. A key aspect of this maintenance is knowing how to replace a furnace filter. In this blog, we'll walk you through the correct way to replace furnace filters, ensuring that your HVAC system operates at its best. Before diving into the steps of replacing a furnace filter, it's important to understand why this task is essential. A furnace filter's primary job is to trap dust, dirt, mold spores, and other debris, preventing them from entering your home's air and potentially damaging your heating system. Regularly changing a furnace filter ensures good air quality and can help significantly reduce energy bills by maintaining efficient airflow. A home air filter plays a critical role in your home's HVAC unit. It filters air that circulates through your heating and cooling system, trapping various types of airborne particles. This not only helps maintain good air quality but also protects the furnace's heating coil and other sensitive components from getting clogged with dirt and debris. When learning how to replace a furnace filter, it's important to start by identifying the correct size and type of filter for your furnace system. Furnace filters come in various sizes, typically measured in inches thick, and types, including disposable pleated, disposable fiberglass, and reusable filters. To find the right size, check your existing filter or the owner's manual. You may use a measuring tape to measure the filter compartment if you're unsure. There are several types of home air filters to choose from. If you're preparing to change a furnace filter, it can be helpful to learn about your options: Disposable Pleated Filters: These are made from polyester or cotton paper and can trap dust, mold spores, and other debris. They are an affordable option and widely used in residential settings. Disposable Fiberglass Filters: These filters are less expensive but also less effective in trapping small particles. They are suitable for homes without furry pets or significant dust issues. Reusable Filters: These can be washed with a garden hose and reused. While they tend to be more expensive upfront, they can be more cost-effective in the long run. Before replacing the filter, ensure that your furnace system is turned off to avoid any safety hazards. Locate the service panel on your furnace and remove it to access the filter compartment. Be prepared with a new filter and possibly a permanent marker to note the date of replacement. Carefully slide out the existing filter from the furnace. If it's a disposable filter, you can dispose of it immediately. For a reusable filter, check if it's dirty enough to require cleaning. Look at your old filter for any signs of excessive dirt or damage. A dirty filter will have visible dust, dirt, and possibly other debris on its surface. If the filter is damaged, it's crucial to replace it immediately, as it can potentially damage your HVAC system. When installing the new furnace filter, pay attention to the airflow direction. Most filters have an arrow indicating the correct direction of airflow. Insert the filter accordingly, ensuring it fits snugly in the filter compartment. If you've never installed a new air filter before, there are a few tips that can help ensure you do it correctly. Do you have a replacement filter ready to go? If so, consider following these pieces of advice for the correct way to replace furnace filters: Ensure the filter is not forced into the compartment. It should fit easily. The cardboard frame of the filter should face the furnace, aligning with the airflow direction. Mark the date of installation on the filter frame with a permanent marker for future reference. Replacing your furnace filter monthly or as recommended by the manufacturer is vital for maintaining a healthy and efficient HVAC system. Regular maintenance — including checking and replacing the air filter regularly — ensures that your furnace filters work effectively, maintaining good air quality and efficient energy use. Now that you know how to replace a furnace filter, it's time to think about reaching out to an experienced HVAC technician for further assistance. While changing a furnace filter is a task most homeowners can handle, there are aspects of furnace maintenance that require professional attention. Scheduling furnace maintenance with qualified technicians like those at SoGood Plumbing, Heating, & Air can ensure that your heating system operates efficiently and safely. Knowing how to replace a furnace filter is a simple yet crucial aspect of maintaining your home's HVAC system. By following these steps, you can ensure that your furnace operates efficiently, saving on energy costs and maintaining good air quality. Remember, for comprehensive services — including routine maintenance and furnace repair in Richmond, VA, and the surrounding area — SoGood Plumbing, Heating, & Air is the name to remember. No matter your needs, our technicians will ensure your furnace is in top condition, improving efficiency and performance. Schedule your furnace services with SoGood Plumbing, Heating, & Air in Central VA today and secure a comfortable and safe home! Imagine it's a chilly November evening, and your furnace suddenly stops working efficiently. The culprit? A clogged furnace filter. Knowing how to replace it is vital for maintaining your home's comfort and air quality. You'll need a few tools, such as a new filter and a screwdriver, to get started. It's essential to verify the furnace is off before you begin. But how do you accurately determine the filter size, and what should you look for when choosing the right replacement? Understanding these steps can significantly affect your heating system's performance.Gather Necessary ToolsBefore replacing your furnace filter, ensure you have all the necessary tools, including a new filter, a screwdriver, and a flashlight. These tools are essential for guaranteeing a smooth and efficient process. First, identify the correct filter size for your furnace. This information can be found in your furnace's manual or the existing filter. Having the correct filter size improves air quality and system efficiency, which directly benefits those in your home.Next, gather a flathead or Phillips screwdriver, depending on the screws securing the furnace cover. This tool lets you safely remove or loosen the cover without damaging the furnace. A flashlight is indispensable, especially if your furnace is located in a dimly lit area. It will help you see inside the unit, locate the filter, and guarantee everything is reassembled correctly.Turn Off the FurnaceTurn off the furnace power supply to prevent accidents or electrical issues during the filter replacement. This vital step guarantees safety and protects the system from potential damage. Begin by locating the furnace switch on or near the furnace itself. If you can't find the switch, check the circuit breaker panel to cut power to the furnace.To execute this step effectively:Identify the furnace switch: Often resembling a standard light switch, it's usually mounted on the side of the furnace or a nearby wall.Check the circuit breaker panel: Locate the breaker labeled 'furnace' and switch it to the 'off' position if the furnace switch isn't accessible.Confirm power disconnection: Listen for the furnace's absence of any hums or operational noises, indicating it's powered down.Use a voltage tester: If available, use it to verify there's no electrical current running to the furnace.Locate the Filter CompartmentWith the furnace safely powered down, you can now locate the filter compartment by examining the furnace's exterior for a panel or slot specifically designed to hold the air filter. This compartment is typically situated along the return air duct or near the blower system, often marked clearly to facilitate easy identification. Look for a rectangular panel with small fasteners or tabs holding it in place. Use a flashlight to assist in your search if your furnace is installed in a tight space.Once you've identified the panel or slot, check for any screws, clips, or latches that need to be undone. Most modern furnaces feature easy-access panels for user convenience, allowing you to slide or lift the panel off simply. However, older models might require a screwdriver to remove the screws securing the panel. Pay attention to any manufacturer's instructions or labels that might be present, as these provide specific guidance on accessing the filter compartment safely. If unsure, consult the furnace's user manual, usually found online, to verify you're not inadvertently damaging any components. This careful approach guarantees the safety and efficiency of your furnace maintenance efforts.Determine Filter SizeTo accurately determine your furnace filter size, measure the dimensions of the existing filter, noting its length, width, and thickness from edge to edge. Use a reliable measuring tape for precision, as incorrect measurements can lead to purchasing the wrong filter and affect your furnace's efficiency. Pay attention to the size markings typically found on the filter's edge, but always verify them by measuring yourself. This guarantees you're getting the exact fit needed for peak performance.Make sure you're looking for the following:Length: Measure from one filter end to another, capturing the longest dimension.Width: Measure across the shorter side, perpendicular to the length.Thickness: Measure the filter's depth, which is often overlooked but essential for a perfect fit.Existing Markings: Note any printed size specifications on the filter for cross-reference.Remove the Old FilterBefore removing the old filter, begin by turning off your furnace to guarantee safety. Locate the service panel on your furnace, which is typically found near the blower compartment. Use a screwdriver to unscrew any fasteners if the panel is secured carefully. Once removed, place the panel aside to access the filter.Identify the filter slot between the air intake and the blower. Pull the old filter out, noting the direction of the airflow arrows printed on the filter's frame. This will be essential when installing the new filter to maintain proper airflow. If the filter is difficult to remove, check for any obstructions or a retaining clip that might be holding it in place. Use gentle force to slide it out completely.As you remove the filter, handle it cautiously to prevent dust and debris from dispersing into the air. Consider wearing gloves to protect your hands from accumulated dust and allergens. Dispose of the old filter in a trash bag immediately, ensuring it doesn't release particles into your environment. Keep the surrounding area clean to maintain the efficiency and longevity of your furnace.Check Filter ConditionInspect the old filter to assess its condition, checking for visible dirt, dust accumulation, and any signs of damage or wear. This step is essential for ensuring the efficiency of your furnace and maintaining air quality. You should analyze the filter thoroughly to determine if it's still functional or if replacement is necessary. Look for the following indicators:Dirt and Dust Build-up: A significant layer of dust or debris suggests the filter is clogged and should be replaced.Discoloration: Filters that are gray or darker than their original color have likely trapped considerable contaminants.Structural Damage: Tears, holes, or bent wires can impede filter performance and harm the furnace system.Odors: Any unusual smells from the filter area can indicate mold or mildew, necessitating immediate replacement.Choose the Right FilterSelecting the right filter involves evaluating factors such as size, MERV rating, material, and compatibility with your furnace model to guarantee peak performance and air quality. Start by measuring the dimensions of your current filter. Accurate measurements are essential; even a slight deviation can impair efficiency. Filters are usually marked with dimensions, but confirm these by measuring the length, width, and depth yourself.Next, consider the MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) rating. A higher MERV rating indicates better particle filtration. A MERV rating between 8 and 13 for residential use balances efficiency and air quality without overburdening your system.Material choice varies from fiberglass to pleated filters. Fiberglass is cost-effective but less efficient, while pleated filters, usually made from polyester or cotton, capture more particles and provide better air quality.Ensure the filter is compatible with your furnace model. Refer to your furnace's manual or the manufacturer's website to confirm. Using an incompatible filter can hinder airflow and reduce system longevity. By selecting the right filter, you're enhancing indoor air quality and extending your furnace's lifespan, serving those around you better.Insert the New FilterCarefully slide the new filter into the designated slot, verifying the airflow arrows printed on the filter align with the direction of airflow indicated on your furnace. This alignment is essential for peak performance and maintaining the efficiency of your HVAC system. When inserting the filter, pay attention to the following aspects to guarantee a smooth and proper fit:Filter Frame: Confirm that the filter frame is intact and free from any bends or damage that could hinder its placement.Seal Edges: Check that the filter's edges create a complete seal within the slot to prevent unfiltered air from bypassing the filter.Firm Fit: The filter should fit snugly within the slot without requiring excessive force, which could damage the filter or the furnace.Correct Orientation: Double-check the filter's orientation to verify it matches the furnace's airflow direction.Secure the Filter CompartmentVerify the filter compartment is securely closed by reattaching any latches or screws that were removed during the filter replacement process. Carefully examine the compartment door to guarantee it aligns properly with its frame. Misalignment can lead to air leakage, reducing the furnace's efficiency. If there are screws, insert them into their respective holes and tighten them using a screwdriver. Be cautious not to overtighten, as this can strip the threads or damage the compartment.Make sure the compartments with latches click into place. Listen for a distinct snapping sound, indicating the latch is firmly engaged. This step is crucial for preventing the filter from dislodging during operation, which could lead to unfiltered air circulating through your home.Double-check that all components are secured to avoid potential hazards or malfunctions. A loose compartment can lead to vibrations, causing noise or damage to the furnace. By confirming the compartment is sealed correctly, you contribute to the safety and functionality of your heating system. This attention to detail protects your equipment and guarantees a cleaner, healthier environment for those you're dedicated to serving.Turn On the FurnaceOnce you've confirmed the filter compartment is secure, switch the furnace back on by turning the thermostat to the desired temperature setting. Verify the thermostat is in 'heat' mode, as some models may default to 'off' or 'cool' after maintenance. Listen for the furnace to start, indicating that the system functions correctly.To confirm the furnace is operating effectively, observe the following:Warm Air Flow: Stand near a vent to feel warm air circulating within a few minutes.Quiet Operation: Listen for smooth, consistent sounds, signaling all components are running efficiently.Thermostat Display: Verify that the current temperature rises to your selected setting.Energy Usage: Monitor your energy consumption to verify no unexpected spikes occur after filter replacement.These checks help confirm that your furnace operates effectively and maintains a comfortable environment for those you serve. If issues arise, such as unusual noises or a lack of warm air, consult the furnace manual or contact a professional. Troubleshooting promptly minimizes disruptions and supports maintaining a cozy, welcoming home. By verifying everything functions smoothly, you're safeguarding the comfort and well-being of everyone in your care. Skip to main content Changing a furnace filter regularly will improve your heating in the winter and your air conditioning in the summer. Time Complexity Cost This easy task will keep your furnace and air conditioner running smoothly for many years to come. If you're thinking you only have to change your furnace filter once a year, you may be shortening the life of your furnace. Many costly furnace repairs can be avoided with regular filter changing. If you don't change the filter, lack of airflow will cause the furnace to overheat and shut down. Similarly, a dirty filter can stop an air conditioner because the coils freeze up due to inadequate airflow. Both issues stress the system. If you're thinking you only have to change your furnace filter once a year, you may be shortening the life of your furnace. Many costly furnace repairs can be avoided with regular filter changing. If you don't change the filter, lack of airflow will cause the furnace to overheat and shut down. Similarly, a dirty filter can stop an air conditioner because the coils freeze up due to inadequate airflow. Both issues stress the system. Check your furnace filter monthly and change it every three months, depending on the type of filter you use. To do this: Turn off the furnace by flipping the furnace switch. It should be on or next to the furnace, and looks like a standard light switch. Find the filter service rack or door. This is most likely on the side with the intake and outtake blower fan. Remove the cover. Slide out the existing filter and hold it up to the light. If you can no longer see light through it, it's time for a new one. Family Handyman Purchase a new filter Filters catch dust and debris in the air, protecting the blower motor. Always have at least one new filter on hand. When buying filters, an inexpensive glass fiber model will do the job. But to reduce airborne dust in your home, go with a standard disposable pleated filter, which costs more. Better yet, to remove even more small particles, install an inexpensive, electro-statically charged high-performance furnace filter. All other options, from a four-inch-thick mechanical air filter to an electronic filter plate system, require electrical or ductwork changes by heating/cooling contractors. Family Handyman Complete DIY projects like a pro! Sign up for our newsletter! Do It Right, Do It Yourself! Install new filter Once you've removed the old furnace filter, slide the new one in place. Find the arrow on the filter edge and point it toward the blower motor. (Putting it in backward decreases the filter's efficiency.) Pro tip: Mark an arrow on the furnace panel to remind yourself which direction to place the filter. Slide it in, replace the cover and turn on the furnace. Family Handyman Download Article Remove your old furnace filter and replace it with a new one in no time Download Article Changing a home furnace filter regularly is the fastest and easiest way to make sure your furnace is running smoothly and efficiently, as well as to help purify the air in your home. Check the furnace filter monthly to see when it needs to be changed. Dispose of it and replace it with a new furnace filter of the same size when it gets dirty. This will keep the air flowing through your furnace, minimize the strain on your heating system, and help filter dust and other particles out of the air in your home. To change your furnace filter, turn off the furnace, then open the door panel to the furnace and take the cover off the filter. Slide the old filter out, then replace it with a new one. Be sure to check the arrow on the new filter so you know which way it goes in. 1 Turn off your furnace before checking or replacing the filter. Set the furnace's thermostat to the "off" position. This will prevent the furnace from turning on while you are checking or replacing the filter.[1] If the furnace turns on while there is not filter in it, then it can suck up potentially-damaging loose debris. Refer to the owner's manual for your furnace for any specific instructions regarding how to replace the filter. Tip: Check your filter every month to see if it needs replacement. Most disposable types of filters are designed to be replaced every 1-2 months. If you have furry pets or your furnace runs all the time, then your filter will get dirty more quickly. 2 Open or slide the door panel off of your furnace. There will be a door on your furnace that either swings open or slides off. Open or remove the door to provide access to the inside of your furnace.[2] If your door is the type that slides off, then you can typically remove it by simply lifting it up until it comes free, and then set it aside. Advertisement 3 Locate the filter in your furnace and remove any cover that is over it. The filter is usually located at the air return duct or the entrance to the blower chamber. There is sometimes another cover over the filter that you will have to pull off.[3] [4] Look for the vents where the air enters into the furnace system to locate the filter near either the air return duct or the entrance to the blower chamber. 4 Slide out the old filter and hold it up to the light. Use both hands to