



## A Furnace to Fit Every Family!

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If you've ever researched a new furnace for your home, then you know how confusing it can be! Forced air furnaces, wall furnaces, free-standing stoves, 80%, 90%, blowers, ignition, gas, electric . . . it can drive a person insane! Let's simplify things a bit. Most people with electric heating opt for heat pumps, it's less costly than straight electric furnace. So now let's discuss gas furnaces.

The first choice you need to make regarding your new furnace is the AFUE rating. For those of us who aren't engineers and HVAC installers, this is the Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency, or how efficiently your furnace will use its fuel. Furnaces these days fall into 1 of 2 groups: 80% efficient and 90% efficient. Now, a few things to keep in mind when considering the efficiency of your new furnace:

- Is this a home you live in or is this a rental property?
- How long will I own this home?
- Is repairing my existing furnace a wiser decision than purchasing a new furnace?
- Just how many bells and whistles do I need/want in a furnace?

If this is a rental or a home you're planning on selling in 5 years or so, I would suggest looking at a more standard 80% model. Gas furnaces are huge selling points in a home themselves, a top-of-the-line furnace won't get you much more money when selling and is a considerable up-front cost. If this is the home you're planning to retire in, one that you're planning on living in for the next 10 years, or if you just plain want the best, this is the time to consider 90% efficiency or more.

First, if your existing furnace can easily be repaired and is not what would be considered an "old" furnace, replacement may not be necessary. Be sure to call 2 or 3 companies to come give you estimates on repair vs. replacement . . . you may find that each company will recommend something different. Don't let anyone talk you into anything you don't feel comfortable with and take the advice of the contractor that seems knowledgeable and makes you feel most at ease. We go on many calls where homeowners have been advised to replace their furnace when what they really needed was a quick repair. Be careful!

Furnaces, regardless of their efficiencies, will basically come in 3 different tiers:

1. The first tier will be your standard furnace, with a single-speed blower motor.
1. In your 2nd tier, the burner steps up to 2 different heat ratings. When the weather gets cold, maybe it freezes at night . . . in the morning the furnace will come on, detect the large temperature difference and kick into high fire to warm you up quickly, then use its low fire to maintain the temperature from that point on.
1. The variable speed blower motor is where it gets cool! The way this was explained to me, it's comparable to a gas pedal on a car. With multiple speeds, when the weather is severe or just temperamental (we Oregonians don't know anything about THAT, now do we?) this furnace will run on whichever speed is needed to keep your family comfortable, low speed, high speed and any speed in between! This all in addition to the low and high fire feature!

All Oregon Tax Credits are gone now, but there is still a \$150 Federal Tax Credit available for furnaces over 95% efficient and your local utility may have rebates available as well!

Whatever the furnace, whoever the contractor, do your research and follow your instincts! And as always: HVAC equipment varies little between brands, go with the contractor you trust!