

Is an Electric Fireplace Right for Me?

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Relaxing in the cozy warmth of a gentle fire is the perfect way to spend any evening or chilly day. An electric fireplace makes a space more inviting and provides more comfortable living in any room of your home. The ambiance an electric fireplace creates and the superior temperature control it delivers make it an excellent investment in lifestyle and energy efficiency. If you're considering installing an electric fireplace insert in your home, here is some information to help you make the best choice for your needs and preferences.

Choices of Fireplace Types

A generation ago, there was no alternative to a wood-burning fireplace. Today, there are several fireplace options: wood-burning, natural gas, or electric. If you're unsure about which is right for you, start your decision process by comparing the information below regarding the convenience, quality, safety, and efficiency of each of the three fireplace types. If you're only interested in an electric model, but are not yet 100% sure about making the investment, more details are provided to help you make an informed decision.

Wood Burning Fireplace

A traditional wood-burning fireplace offers that great smell of burning wood, but the wall construction, masonry, and chimney installation is a large, costly construction project. It requires building permits, and the total cost is comparatively high. Then, using a wood-burning fireplace requires diligent management.

- You must find resources for either buying wood or cutting and chopping it yourself. Then, you must store the wood in a dry place, and carry arm-loads of it inside when you need it. There is also a frequent struggle to start a fire, especially if the wood is not ideally aged inside, and the work of maintaining (tending) the fire to keep it from dying prematurely.
- Burning wood emits air pollutants and leaves masses of messy ashes and soot. You'll need to dispose of those remains someplace other than a trash can containing combustibles. The chimney must be cleaned out every few years or so, or as often as needed based on your frequency of use, usual size of fires, and other factors.
- Property damage risk is comparatively high with wood fires. Even with the most careful tending and best fire management habits, forgetting to open the flue just once, or closing it prematurely after use, can rapidly result in a home filled with smoke and soot.
- Regulating the heat to maintain a comfort level from a wood fire requires frequent readjustment. Users must continuously add more wood, then wait for the space to warm up again, alternating with opening a door or window to cool down the room when the heat becomes too high. The net effect is extreme heating and energy inefficiency.

Safety Considerations: Safety risks are inherent in burning wood inside a building, including the potential for chimney fires, dangerous levels of ash and smoke inhalation, and/or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Natural Gas Fireplace

A gas fireplace is much more complicated to install, maintain, and use than an electric model. Installing gas lines and ventilation for the lines will all need to be configured to be compatible with your home's existing construction. That's an expensive investment, in addition to the cost of a gas fireplace unit, which averages around ten times the cost of electric models.

- Using a gas fireplace requires just turning it off and on and adjusting the flame as desired.
- Another key comparison is in heating and energy efficiency. Both natural gas and wood-burning fireplaces lose a minimum of 30 percent of the heat they produce, depending on the design and other factors.

Safety Considerations: There are inherent safety risks in using any appliance or other equipment that utilizes natural gas. Those risks include the potential for dangerous gas emissions and/or a house fire from gas plumbing and attached equipment.

Why Choose an Electric Fireplace?

An electric fireplace is a much more affordable alternative for enjoying the comfort of having a fireplace in your home. Installing and using even a high-end electric fireplace model is a significantly more cost-effective solution for supplemental heating than either

wood-burning or natural gas options. Some electric fireplace models can heat up to 1,000 square feet.

- Electric fireplaces operate by just the touch of a button. Adjusting flame size, and starting a fire, putting out a fire, reading the thermostat, and more can be done with a remote control.
- Today's electric fireplaces are built to last for many years and require no special maintenance.
- Electric models also use only small amounts of electricity to function, and they produce zero emissions, and unlike wood and gas burning types, an electric fireplace does not waste much energy. All together, electric fireplaces are by far the most environmentally friendly and highly energy-efficient fireplace type. Electric models use only around 14 to 18 cents per hour.

Safety Considerations: A frequent question from people familiar with the safety risks of wood and gas models is, "Are electric fireplaces safe?" An electric fireplace is an overall much safer option than either of the other two types. Many electric versions have an automatic shut-off, for extra safety control.

How Does an Electric Fireplace Work?

Depending on the model you choose, an electric fireplace unit can either be hardwired into your home's electrical system or simply plugged into an existing wall outlet. Some upgraded models come with remote control devices with an abundance of functions and information display features. There are two general types of electric fireplaces currently available:

- ***Electric Fireboxes:*** These are smaller than the wall-mounted linear models. Electric fireboxes fit almost any space and can be simply plugged into the nearest electrical outlet. It's the world's quickest and easiest solution to start enjoying cozy times by the fireplace in your home. More substantial electric fireplace models require hardwiring with either 120V or 240V.
- ***Wall-mount Linear Electric Fireplaces:*** This popular option can either be hung on a wall or recessed into it, for a sleek fully finished aesthetic. Recessed units protrude only about 6" to 8" from the wall into the room. That means an electric fireplace insert can be located anywhere you have a little free wall space.



Customizing Your Electric Fireplace

A vast array of options for customizing electric fireplaces are available to suit any needs and tastes. Just a few of the custom features for either electric fireboxes and linear wall-mount fireplaces include these, among many others:

- Fireplace mantels
- Trim kits
- Thermostat controlled heating
- Natural-effect glowing ember options

Are Electric Fireplaces Worth It?

Though the technology of even the most advanced electric fireplace models cannot yet duplicate the nostalgic aroma of burning wood. However, in exchange for missing the aroma of a good smelling wood fire, much greater heating and energy efficiency, convenience, and safety are gained.

Another concern had been that the flames produced by an electric fireplace don't really look natural. Electric fireplace technology has progressed so much over recent years that current models generate spectacularly realistic flames. These days it can be surprisingly difficult to distinguish between flames of an electric fireplace and other types.

Why Choose DK Electrical Solutions for Your Fireplace Installation?

We are fully licensed, bonded, and insured Master-level Electricians, among the industry's most knowledgeable and experienced in New Jersey and the greater New England region.

Having the best-qualified professionals in the industry doing the electrical work in your home helps ensure that the job will be done right the first time.

Our upfront pricing is complete, so there are never any surprises. Ask about our special coupon offers.

When the work is completed, our customers have the benefit of our 100% satisfaction guarantee. We're also available 24/7. So, whenever you need the region's best-qualified electricians, we're here to help.

For More Information About Electric Fireplaces or to Schedule an Appointment

DK Master Electricians have been performing electrical installation throughout New Jersey for over a decade. For more information or to schedule an appointment for your free estimate, contact DK Electrical Solutions, Inc., anytime at (609)-796-4177. Or, use our online request for a free estimate.