

Energy Savings Tips

What is included in your energy bill?

Each month you pay to power your home with electricity, heat and water. An average family spends almost \$2,000 a year on energy.

Those costs can add up quickly, but luckily there are also many ways to save.

Here's how:

Lighting

In your bill:

Approximately 10% of your bill goes to lighting your home.

Ways to save:

- Switch to CFLs (Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs). CFLs can last 10,000 hours or 10 times longer than an incandescent bulb.
- CFLs cost more per bulb, but each CFL can save \$5 per year for every 60-watt bulb it replaces
- Turn off lights! One 100-watt bulb left on overnight costs \$25 per year
- Shop for sales on CFLs. October is National Energy Month and home improvement stores may run specials on CFLs.
- Get the right bulb. Lights on dimmer switches or that have 3-way sockets need specialty CFLs.
- Keep light bulbs clean. Dust on a light bulb can cut its output by 25%.

Water

In your bill:

Approximately 13% of your bill goes to water heating, which is the 2nd largest energy user in most homes.

Ways to save:

- Set your thermostat to 120° to 130°. This is one of the easiest, and biggest, ways to save. Water is normally set to 140°; turning it down will save 6-10 percent on your bill. It also slows the buildup of minerals and corrosion in the water heater and pipes.
- Turn down the thermostat on your water even lower when on vacation. Why pay to heat your water when no one is home to use it? However, if there is a risk that the pipes will freeze, don't turn it down too low.
- Install low-flow showerheads. They use up to ½ the water of regular showerheads.
- Buy the right size water heater. Buying a water heater that is too big will waste energy and money.
- Fix leaky water faucets. Did you know that 30 drops of water per minute can waste up to 50 gallons of water a month? Fix it before it gets worse.
- Install low-flow aerators on the faucets.

Kitchen

In your bill:

Approximately 7% of your energy bill is eaten up by the fridge.

Ways to save:

- Set your refrigerator temperature between 36° and 38° F; your freezer between 0° and 5°.
- Keep the freezer full and defrost regularly to keep it operating efficiently.
- If you have a second fridge or freezer but rarely use it, unplug it. They can be costly to operate, usually running about \$100 to \$200 a year.
- Choose Energy Star models when buying new appliances.
- Use your dishwasher. It actually costs less to run your dishwasher than washing dishes by hand. It can save 5,000 gallons of water a year, or \$40.
- Wash only full loads of dishes, and skip the hi-temp wash cycle & heated dry settings.
- There's no need to pre-rinse! Phew! Scrape the dishes instead – dishwashers made in the past 5 to 10 years are built to handle heavily soiled dishes.
- Clean off the top of your fridge. Piling items on the top makes the appliance work harder, using more energy. Also, refrigerators that have the freezer on top are more energy efficient.

Heating

In your bill:

Approximately 35% of your energy bill goes toward heating or cooling your home. This is the single biggest energy expense for homeowners.

Ways to save:

- Programmable thermostats. When used properly, a programmable thermostat can save up to \$150 per year. Program your thermostat to lower your temperature a couple of hours before bed or before leaving for work all day. Set it to come back on approximately 45 minutes before waking or coming home.
- Turn down the heat. Did you know that turning your thermostat down by one degree will save 2% on your heating bill? The more you can live with cooler temperatures, the more you'll save.
- Have your oil forced-air furnace serviced every year. Gas-burning furnaces are fairly clean and do not need to be serviced nearly as often.
- Check filters monthly. You may not need to replace filters each month, but it won't hurt to check.
- Clean the area around your furnace. This decreases the chance of fire and improves the air flow.
- Think about replacing old, inefficient heating systems with newer, high-efficiency furnaces.
- Insulate. Sealing and insulating your home can reduce your heating and cooling costs by 30%.

For more information on ways to improve your home's energy efficiency, check out our Energy Smart program.