

## **ENERGY TIPS**

### **1. Unplug**

- Unplug seldom-used appliances, like an extra refrigerator in the basement or garage that contains just a few items. You may save around \$10 every month on your utility bill.
- Unplug your chargers when you're not charging. Every house is full of little plastic power supplies to charge cell phones, PDA's, digital cameras, cordless tools and other personal gadgets. Keep them unplugged until you need them.
- Use power strips to switch off televisions, home theater equipment, and stereos when you're not using them. Even when you think these products are off, together, their "standby" consumption can be equivalent to that of a 75 or 100 watt light bulb running continuously.

### **2. Set Computers to Sleep and Hibernate**

- Enable the "sleep mode" feature on your computer, allowing it to use less power during periods of inactivity. In Windows, the power management settings are found on your control panel. Mac users, look for energy saving settings under system preferences in the apple menu.
- Configure your computer to "hibernate" automatically after 30 minutes or so of inactivity. The "hibernate mode" turns the computer off in a way that doesn't require you to reload everything when you switch it back on. Allowing your computer to hibernate saves energy and is more time-efficient than shutting down and restarting your computer from scratch. When you're done for the day, shut down.

### **3. Take Control of Temperature**

- Set your thermostat in winter to 68 degrees or less during the daytime, and 55 degrees before going to sleep (or when you're away for the day). During the summer, set thermostats to 78 degrees or more.
- Use sunlight wisely. During the heating season, leave shades and blinds open on sunny days, but close them at night to reduce the amount of heat lost through windows. Close shades and blinds during the summer or when the air conditioner is in use or will be in use later in the day.
- Set the thermostat on your water heater between 120 and 130 degrees. Lower temperatures can save more energy, but you might run out of hot water or end up using extra electricity to boost the hot water temperature in your dishwasher.

### **4. Use Appliances Efficiently**

- Set your refrigerator temperature at 38 to 42 degrees Fahrenheit; your freezer should be set between 0 and 5 degrees Fahrenheit. Use the power-save switch if your fridge has one, and make sure the door seals tightly. You can check this by making sure that a dollar bill closed in between the door gaskets is difficult to pull out. If it slides easily between the gaskets, replace them.
- Don't preheat or "peek" inside the oven more than necessary. Check the seal on the oven door, and use a microwave oven for cooking or reheating small items.

- Wash only full loads in your dishwasher, using short cycles for all but the dirtiest dishes. This saves water and the energy used to pump and heat it. Air-drying, if you have the time, can also reduce energy use.
- In your clothes washer, set the appropriate water level for the size of the load; wash in cold water when practical, and always rinse in cold.
- Clean the lint filter in the dryer after each use. Dry heavy and light fabrics separately and don't add wet items to a load that's already partly dry. If available, use the moisture sensor setting. (A clothesline is the most energy-efficient clothes dryer of all!)

## 5. Turn Out the Lights

- Don't forget to flick the switch when you leave a room.
- Remember this at the office, too. Turn out or dim the lights in unused conference rooms, and when you step out for lunch. Work by daylight when possible. A typical commercial building uses more energy for lighting than anything else.

## SIMPLE HOUSEHOLD TOOLS AND GADGETS (\$)

These easy at-home energy savers will instantly improve your home's energy-efficiency, and save money on your utility bill. A quick trip to the home improvement or hardware store will set you on your way.

### 1. Weatherizers

The gaps around the windows and doors in an average American house are the equivalent of a 3 foot by 3 foot hole in the wall! Caulk and weather-strip to seal off these air leaks.

- Stop air from escaping under doors with "sweeps" or "shoes" attached to the bottom.
- Use window putty to seal gaps around loose window panes.
- Cover bare floors with padded rugs for added insulation.
- Look for other air leaks you can seal, such as those around plumbing penetrations or ceiling-mounted lighting fixtures.
- Better yet, call an energy rater who can test your house for hidden leaks with a "blower door."

## 2. **Compact fluorescent bulbs**

Lighting accounts for about 15 percent of household energy use. If you swap the five standard light bulbs you use most for energy-saving compact fluorescents, you can save roughly \$60 each year on electricity. Make sure you use Energy Star compact fluorescents, which are tested for quality and longevity.

## 3. **Water Heater Blankets**

Bundle up your water heater, especially if it's located in an unheated part of the house.

## 4. **Fresh Filters**

Keep your air-conditioning and heating systems properly maintained by changing air filters and keeping air conditioner coils clean.

## 5. **Low-Flow Showerheads and Faucet Aerators**

Replacing old models with new low-flow designs prevents the energy used to heat water from going down the drain.

## **LONG-TERM ENERGY EFFICIENCY (\$\$)**

If you're thinking of making major changes around the house, keep these tips in mind for big energy (and dollar) savings in the long run.

### 1. **Buy Energy-Efficient Appliances**

Many of today's new appliances use half the energy of those from 20 years ago. If you're in the market, remember this rule of thumb: look for products with the Energy Star® label -- they typically use about 20 to 40 percent less energy than other new models. Some electric companies and even state governments offer consumer rebates on Energy Star-rated models. For detailed information on how to make informed purchases, check out the [Energy Star](#) website.

### 2. **Insulate Your Home**

Most homes in the United States are less than optimally insulated, and older homes tend to have higher heating and cooling costs than newer homes. Installing proper insulation, windows, ducts and heating/cooling systems can help keep these costs down while improving the comfort of your home.

### **Save Up to \$60 with Compact Fluorescent Bulbs**

Most of the light bulbs in your house are probably incandescent, much like the bulb Thomas Edison invented more than 100 years ago. Now, there's a longer-lasting, more efficient alternative: the compact fluorescent.

Today's compact fluorescents fit most household fixtures and give off the same warm, steady light as incandescents, using only one-quarter to one-third the energy and lasting 10 times as long.

A compact fluorescent bulb is initially more expensive than a standard bulb, but it can save you \$30 to \$60 dollars on electricity during its lifetime -- and also keep half a ton of heat-trapping carbon dioxide out of the air.

3. What follows is a generic guide to retrofitting your home with energy-efficient features. However, the best way to learn about the specific needs of your home is to get an energy rating. An energy rater will conduct a detailed analysis of your home and identify areas where you can make cost-effective improvements in energy efficiency. You can find a list of certified raters by area through [RESNET](#), the Residential Energy Services Network.
  
4. To get an idea of what efficiency measures might make sense for your home, start with the [Department of Energy's Insulation Fact Sheet](#) to determine what type of insulation is best suited to your house and your climate. Then, follow these general guidelines:
  - Start with the attic. Good insulation here can save 20 to 35 percent in heating and air conditioning costs.
  - Insulate under the floor, around hot water pipes and heating ducts, and in crawl spaces for further energy savings.
  - Install new windows that meet or exceed Energy Star specifications. These windows keep heat from escaping, and in hot climates, keep out half of the sun's heat energy. They also reduce noise. The U-factor, listed on the National Fenestration Council label, reflects the insulation ability of the entire window, not just the glass. Look for a U-factor of 0.35 or lower. For homes with overheating problems or with high air conditioning bills, you should also look for a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of .35 or lower.

## 5. Choose Renewable Energy

Many consumers now have the power to choose their own energy supplier. If you have a choice, pick a supplier that uses renewable power resources, like solar, wind, low-impact hydroelectric, or geothermal. Find out if your state offers electric choice by using [Green-e's Pick Your Power website](#), a state-by-state guide to green energy options. In some states, instead of choosing a specific electricity supplier, you can support renewable energy by paying a small premium on your electric bill. If those options are not available in your area and you've already implemented the other energy-saving suggestions in this guide, you could look into purchasing carbon offsets to counterbalance your energy consumption. See our [guide to carbon offsets](#) for details.

### Who Gets an [Energy Star](#)?

The Energy Star® label identifies products that are more energy-efficient than other models in their category. And it isn't limited to appliances. More than 40 types of household and commercial products are eligible for the Energy Star label. Look for it when you're shopping for items like these:

#### **Appliances:**

Dishwashers, clothes washers, dehumidifiers and refrigerators.

#### **Heating and Cooling:**

Ceiling fans, room air conditioners and programmable thermostats.

#### **Home Electronics:**

Cordless phones, DVD players, home audio systems, televisions, VCRs and combination units.

**Lighting:** Compact fluorescent bulbs and lighting fixtures that meet quality standards.

#### **Office Equipment:**

Computers, copiers, faxes, monitors, printers, scanners and multipurpose devices.

**Home:** Windows, doors and skylights.