

15 Tips to Save Energy & Reduce Your Energy Bills

Looking for ways to stay comfortable while saving money and energy? Here are 15 energy savers that help put a smile on your face, preserve our planet, and keep cash in your wallet.

1. **Avoid Peak Energy Use.** This may require a little bit of habit building but definitely worth your while. You can dramatically reduce your energy bills while helping to prevent electricity outages when you avoid running appliances during peak hours, typically from around 3 pm to 8 pm. This is also crucial when an electricity emergency is declared.
2. **Switch to Energy Efficient Appliances & Products.** The trademarked Energy Star[®] program is responsible for promoting energy efficiency, and run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). This ever-popular Energy Star label can be found on over 75 different certified appliances and product categories. Simple updates include replacing outdated incandescent light bulbs with Energy Star[®] lamps and light fixtures. Energy efficient appliances such as dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, washers, humidifiers and purifiers can also significantly reduce your energy bills. Many Energy Star[®] appliances also offer rebates, adding extra cash in your pocket.
3. **Inefficiencies in Your Air Conditioner.** The best way to decrease energy costs is by replacing old cooling equipment with a new, energy-efficient model. An air conditioning professional can assist in determining what is ideal for your home.
4. **Use Your Microwave.** Designed specifically to heat liquid or food's liquid content, microwave heat waves don't waste energy heating the air or the container around your food. Or use your propane BBQ grill to cook up savory meals and save more on your electric bill!
5. **Washing Clothes.** Most clothes can be washed in warm water instead of hot, for effective cleaning without significant fading or shrinking. Washing clothes at a cold-water setting also means clothing is less likely to shrink or fade, and is even more gentle on the actual cloth fibers. Cold water should also be used to rinse clothes.
6. **Your Water Heater.** Is your water heater powered by propane? If not, you may want to consider converting to one. It's relatively easy to replace and the perfect time if your existing non-propane powered water heater is old. Propane water heaters can cost around 30% less to operate over time and they recover hot water faster than electric models. Whether propane or otherwise, help extend your water heater's life and increase energy efficiency by draining it every 6 months or so.
7. **Remember Your Dryer's Efficiency.** Run your dryer during non-peak hours and remember to run only full loads. Also remember to clean the clothes dryer's lint trap after each use. When the screen is clogged with lint, the dryer works harder to perform, pushing up your energy use and expense. A clean lint screen allows more air to flow out the exhaust vent for a more efficient operation.
8. **Turn Off What's Not Being Used.** Any appliances, lights and equipment should be turned off when not in use. It's one small thing we often take for granted yet contributes to a decrease in annual energy costs. An added tip is to use a power strip. We all have electronic equipment and a super easy way to save extra cash is by plugging your electronic devices into a power strip which can easily be turned off when not in use. This alone might save you up to \$100 annually!
9. **Consider a Programmable Thermostat.** Many are conveniently controllable via your smart device for precise temperature control. They can "learn" your favorite settings and automatically adjust temperatures while helping you save up to 12% on heating bills and up to 15% on cooling bills. Reap additional savings by setting the temperature just a little higher during the warmer months. Each degree above 78°F can help you save over 5% in cooling costs. And don't forget to look for special offers and rebates while shopping!

10. **Using Your Dishwasher.** If you believe washing your dishes by hand uses less water, think again. Your dishwasher not only uses less water but it cleans better and saves you time for other things. Depending on the size of your household and hand dishwashing frequency, an energy efficient dishwasher can save almost 5,000 gallons of water each year. Save even more energy by allowing your dishes to air dry instead of using your dishwasher's dry cycle.
11. **Attic House Fans.** Attic fans provide ventilation and save energy while also protecting your roof by cooling the attic; circulating hot air out, and bringing cooler outside air in. There are days when an attic house fan can actually replace the use of an air conditioner because it draws cool air into your home through the windows while forcing hot air out through your attic vents.
12. **Consider Energy-Efficient Windows & Entry Doors.** According to the Department of Energy, heat gain and loss through drafty windows and doors are responsible for around 25% - 30% of residential heating and cooling energy use. Your home can be more comfortable and energy efficient no matter what season if you replace old windows and entry doors with energy-efficient ones.
13. **Defend Your Home with Weatherproofing.** If your home suffers from drafty windows or entry doors but you're not quite ready to purchase energy-efficient replacements, consider weather stripping, sealing and caulking your leaky windows and doors. These offer a quick fix to help keep unwanted outdoor air from seeping into your comfy indoor space.
14. **Fix Leaky Faucets.** The sound of a dripping faucet can be annoying. Moreover, it means water is being wasted, literally down the drain. Luckily, fixing a leaky faucet is quick and inexpensive. Even a novice DIYer can handle this. Your local home improvement store can provide guidance and the needed hardware.
15. **Replace Your AC Filters Regularly.** Air conditioning isn't cheap to begin with. Dusty, dirty filters restrict airflow, may cause your system to run longer, and increase energy use. Simply change your filter monthly to save money and support the longevity of your system.

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