



Energy-Saving Tips for the Home



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Want to get started saving energy immediately? Do we have some ideas for you! We also have some tips for more long-term investments in energy efficiency around the house—so let's get started:

Water Heating

- Set water heater temperature no higher than 120°F—or 115°F if there are only one or two people in the household.
- Install water-heater wrap per manufacturer's instructions.
- Drain 1-2 gallons from the bottom of the water heater each year to reduce sediment buildup.
- Install heat traps on hot and cold water lines when it's time to replace your water heater.
- Insulate exposed hot water lines.
- Limit shower length to 5-7 minutes.
- Install low-flow shower heads.
- Fix dripping faucets.
- Don't let water run while you are shaving or brushing your teeth.

Laundry

- Wash clothes in cold water. Use hot water only for very dirty loads.
- Try to do only full laundry loads; if you must do smaller loads, adjust the water level to match the load size, especially when using hot water.
- Always use cold-water rinse.
- Use bath towels at least twice before washing them.
- Clean your dryer's lint trap before each load.
- Make sure the outdoor dryer exhaust door closes when the dryer is off.
- Verify that the dryer vent hose is tightly connected to the inside wall fitting and to the dryer, and that it is not kinked or clogged.
- Minimize clothes drying time; use the dryer's moisture sensor if available.
- Dry consecutive loads to harvest heat remaining in dryer from last load.
- Consider using a "solar" clothes dryer—an old-fashioned clothesline.

Kitchen

- Use your refrigerator's anti-sweat feature only if necessary.
- Switch your refrigerator's power-saver (if available) to "ON."
- Clean refrigerator coils annually.
- Set the refrigerator temperature to 34° - 37°F and freezer temperature to 0° - 5°F.
- Ensure gaskets around door seal tightly.
- Unplug unused refrigerators or freezers.
- Use the microwave for cooking when possible.
- When cooking on the oven range, use pot lids to help food cook faster.
- If you are heating water for cooking, use hot tap water instead of cold.
- Remember to turn off the kitchen exhaust fan after cooking.
- Use a crockpot instead of simmering foods on the stove.
- Rinse dirty dishes with cold water before putting them into the dishwasher.
- Use cold water for garbage disposal.
- Run the dishwasher only when it is fully loaded.
- Use the air-dry cycle instead of heat-dry cycle to dry dishes.

Lighting

- Replace any light bulb that burns more than one hour per day with its equivalent compact fluorescent bulb.
- Turn off unnecessary lighting.
- Replace outdoor lighting with its outdoor-rated equivalent compact fluorescent bulb (CFL).
- Use fixtures with electronic ballasts and T-8, 32-watt fluorescent lamps.
- Use outdoor security lights with a photocell and/or a motion sensor.

Miscellaneous

- Turn off and unplug (if possible) any electrical device or appliance not in use, including: computers and monitors; electric blankets; televisions, stereos, and radios; curling irons and hot rollers; coffee makers; pool pumps and/or heaters; livestock water tank heaters; heat tape; and battery chargers.
- Ensure that all new appliances purchased are Energy Star approved.

Heating and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

- Set thermostats to 78°F in summer, and 68°F in winter.
- Run ceiling fans on medium, blowing down in summer, and on low, blowing up in winter.
- Change HVAC air filters monthly, making sure they are facing in the correct direction (look for the arrow on the side of the filter).
- When heating or cooling systems are on, keep windows locked.
- Insulate electric wall plugs and wall switches with foam pads.
- Caulk along baseboards with a clear sealant.
- Close fireplace dampers when not burning a fire.
- Caulk around plumbing penetrations through walls beneath bathroom and kitchen sinks, as well as around electrical wire penetrations at the top of the interior walls.
- In winter, close shades and drapes at night to keep heat in, and open them during the day to catch free solar heat. In summer, close shades and drapes during the day to help keep heat out.
- Insulate the attic access door and ensure that it closes tightly.
- Make sure attic insulation does not block soffit vents.
- Do not close off unused rooms that are conditioned by forced-air systems.
- Do not close supply air registers.
- Check to be sure return air grilles are not blocked by furniture.
- Ensure windows and doors are properly weather-stripped.
- Make sure outside soffit vents are not blocked.
- Do not use roof-top power ventilators for attic exhaust as they may evacuate conditioned air from your home.
- Have your HVAC system serviced once per year by a NATE-certified technician.
- If your home's relative humidity stays in the 60-percent range or higher in summer, ask your HVAC technician about lowering your central air conditioning unit's indoor fan speed.
- Ensure that window A/C units are weather-stripped, and that the window has weather-stripping between the middle of the top and bottom pane. Remove and clean window A/C filters monthly. Keep "fresh-air" vents on window A/C units closed.
- Minimize use of electric space heaters.
- When using the fireplace, reduce heat loss by opening the damper in the bottom of the firebox (if provided) or open the nearest window slightly.
- Caulk around basement windows and storm windows.
- Ensure that floor registers are not blocked with rugs, drapes, or furniture.
- Keep your outdoor heat pump/air conditioning unit clean and free of debris.
- Outside your home, caulk around all penetrations including telephone, electrical, cable, gas, water spigots, dryer vents, etc.
- In a basement, seal the sill and band joist with durable caulking or foam sealant.
- Use heavy-duty, clear sheets of plastic on the inside of windows to reduce the amount of cold air entering your home.
- Verify your supply air duct "boots" (behind supply air registers) are caulked to the ceiling, wall sheetrock, or flooring.
- Make sure that any ducts in an unconditioned space are tightly connected to your HVAC equipment.
- Check to be sure that all outdoor doors (including storm doors) seal tightly.
- In two-story homes serviced by one HVAC system, a paddle fan at the top of the stairs can push down warm, second-floor air.
- Install 15-minute, spring-wound timers on bathroom ventilator fans.
- Always run your HVAC system fan on "AUTO." Running it on "ON" uses more electricity and can decrease your air conditioner's ability to remove moisture.
- Keep your garage door down. A warmer garage in the winter and cooler garage in the summer will save energy.