

Energy Tips- for Free!

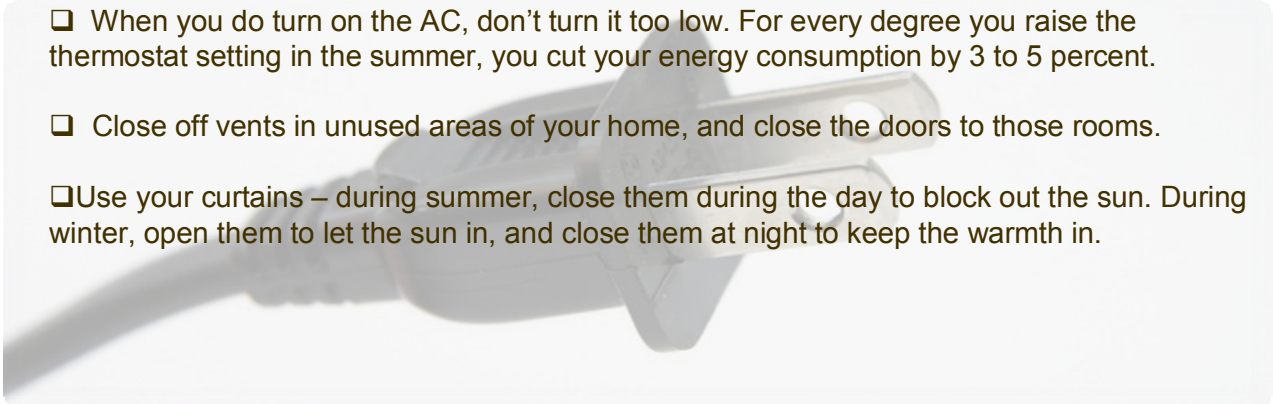
Everyone – no matter how limited their personal budget – can afford to save energy. In fact, during these days of rising prices, few of us can afford *not* to. It's simple and cheap to make energy efficiency part of your daily life

Home Appliances

- Appliances can draw power even when you are not using them - this unseen drain is called a phantom load. Turn off and unplug TVs, DVD players, computers, lights, etc. when not in use.
- Group your appliances onto power strips (microwave, toaster oven, coffeemaker, etc., on one; printer, computer, iPod, cell phone charger, speakers, etc. on another) and then turn off the power strip.
- If an item is charged, unplug it. Cell phones, PDAs, and iPods can lose 95% of the electricity just through phantom loads. When they are fully charged, unplug the charger from the outlet.
- Turn off your computer monitor if you aren't going to use the computer for more than 20 minutes. Turn off your entire set-up if you are not going to use your computer for more than 2 hours.
- Shorten the sleep cycle on your computer to the shortest possible interval. Use the dimmer function to lower your screen contrast to a lower intensity.

Heating and Cooling

- During summer, hold off on the air conditioning and use fans as long as possible. Remember, the fan cools your body by moving air over your skin – it won't cool off the room. Don't leave the fan on if no one is in the room.
- When you do turn on the AC, don't turn it too low. For every degree you raise the thermostat setting in the summer, you cut your energy consumption by 3 to 5 percent.
- Close off vents in unused areas of your home, and close the doors to those rooms.
- Use your curtains – during summer, close them during the day to block out the sun. During winter, open them to let the sun in, and close them at night to keep the warmth in.



Start out with these tips – and they won't cost you a thing!

- ❑ Use the microwave, slow-cooker, and toaster oven more often. They either use much less energy than your stovetop or oven, or they cook foods quickly in very short amounts of time.
- ❑ Try to wean yourself from the electric coffeemaker. Experiment with methods that do not depend on as much electricity (ie, brew or percolate coffee and then pour it into a thermal carafe or thermos). Save the electric coffeemaker for when you have company. Unplug it when not in use.
- ❑ Lower the temperature on the hot water heater to no more than 120 degrees. 15% of home heating bills go to heating water.
- ❑ Wash your clothes (the ones that are normal dirty, not disgusting dirty) in cold water. Plenty of detergents are formulated to work just as well in cold water as hot – read your label.

Each of these tips costs less than \$25:

- ❑ Buy and use a CFL or LED light bulb. Put it in the fixture that you use most often.
- ❑ Check your furnace or AC filter every month, and clean and replace as needed. Dirty filters increase your bills and shorten the life of the appliance.
- ❑ Insulate your hot water tank, hot water pipes, and exposed ductwork in basements, attics, and crawlspaces.
- ❑ Seal and weatherstrip doors and windows.



These energy-savings tips cost between \$25-\$500:

- ❑ Before you buy anything that plugs in – check to see if it comes with the EnergyStar label. They are developing new standards for appliances all the time.
- ❑ Get a home energy audit. The auditor should inspect not just your home but also your energy bills.
- ❑ Install a programmable thermostat that will adjust the temperature automatically during hours no one is at home. Many utilities offer programs to help customers afford this – check with yours. A programmable thermostat can save you 10-20% on heating and cooling costs every year.
- ❑ If you have single paned windows, consider installing storm windows. They can reduce heat loss by 20-50%.