



Start Saving Energy Now



Source: www.epa.gov

The old saying *never put off until tomorrow what you can do today* is as true for energy conservation as it is for anything else. While energy-efficiency projects, such as weatherization and furnace upgrades, may seem time-consuming and expensive, there is no need to worry. These low-cost, energy-saving measures will not take a lot of time, and they will help you reduce energy costs starting today.

1. Adjust your thermostat. Adjusting temperatures at night or when you are not at home is one of the most effective ways to lower your energy bill. For every degree of temperature change over an eight-hour period, you can save an average of 1 percent on your heating or cooling costs.
2. Go unplugged. The average American household uses 25 consumer electronic devices. Many of these devices continue to use energy when they are turned off. While some devices must remain plugged in, unplug televisions, stereos, or computers that you do not use very often. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, unplugging those unused electronics can save up to 10 percent on your electric bill.
3. Change your furnace filter. A dirty furnace filter reduces heating and cooling system efficiency, wasting energy and costing you money. If you have not changed your filter for a while, check it. Filters for most systems can be found at your local hardware or DIY store. Change the filter once per month during the heating and cooling seasons.
4. Lower the temperature of your hot water heater. Tank water heaters are typically installed at a temperature setting of 140°F. You can save on water heating costs by lowering the thermostat. For most households, a temperature setting of 120°F will optimize savings while providing you with a hot shower.
5. Air dry your laundry. When doing laundry, why not air dry your clothes? It will save you the cost of running the dryer and air drying may help to keep clothes looking new.
6. Close the curtain on heat loss. Windows cause a substantial amount of heat loss, but decorative window treatments, such as draperies, shades, and shutters, will help to keep the heat where you want it—inside your house. Hang decorative treatments as close to the window as possible to create a sealed air space. Closing window treatments at night will help to retain heat.
7. Cook up energy savings. Home cooking is a great way to make healthy meals for your family, but some cooking habits waste energy. Cover pots and pans; food will cook more efficiently and the kitchen will stay cooler in the summer. Match pots and pans to the size of the burner and keep burners clean. Save energy by using a microwave oven to heat food whenever possible.
8. Turn on ceiling fans. In the summer, ceiling fans increase air circulation, making you feel more comfortable and reducing the need for air conditioning. In the winter, reverse fan direction to bring the warm air that's near the ceiling down into the living space. To save energy, turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room.

Take a look around, you can probably think of additional ways to save. Are lights left on in unoccupied rooms? Do you wash dishes and laundry with less than a full load? Can you take shorter showers? A few simple lifestyle changes can reduce energy costs and your impact on the environment.